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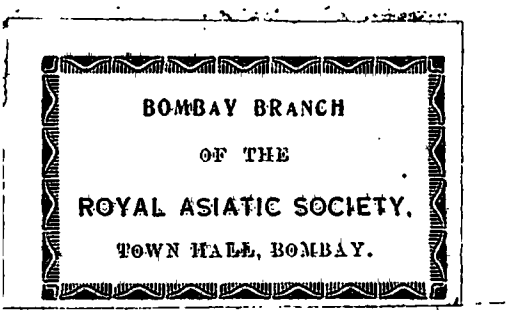

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THE

DEERSLAYER:

A TALE.

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BY J. FENIMORE COOPER, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF "THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS," "THE PATH-FINDER," THE PIONEERS," AND "THE PRAIRIE."

"What Terrors round him wait!
Amazement in his van, with Flight combined,
And Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude behind."

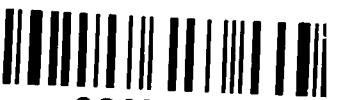
GRAY.

KX

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL III.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1841.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THE DEERSLAYER.

VOL. III.

LONDON
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THE

DEERSLAYER.

CHAPTER I.

"Lightly they'll talk of the spirit that's gone,
And o'er his cold ashes upbraid him;
But nothing he'll reck, if they'll let him sleep on,
In the grave where a Briton has laid him."

DISPUTED.

The reader must imagine the horror that daughters would experience at unexpectedly beholding the shocking spectacle that was placed before the eyes of Judith and Esther, as related in the close of the last chapter. We shall pass over the first emotions, the first acts of filial piety, and proceed with the narrative, by imagining rather than relating most of the revolting features of the scene. The mutilated and ragged head was bound up, the unseemly blood was wiped from the face of the sufferer, the other appliances required by appearances and care were resorted to, and there was time to inquire into the more serious circumstances of the case. The facts were never

known until years later, in all their details, simple as they were; but they may as well be related here, as it can be done in a few words. In the struggle with the Hurons, Hutter had been stabbed by the knife of the old warrior, who had used the discretion to remove the arms of every one but himself. Being hard pushed by his sturdy foe, his knife had settled the matter. This occurred just as the door was opened, and Hurry burst out upon the platform, as has been previously related. This was the secret of neither party's having appeared in the subsequent struggle; Hutter having been literally disabled, and his conqueror being ashamed to be seen with the traces of blood about him, after having used so many injunctions to convince his young warriors of the necessity of taking their prisoners alive. When the three Hurons returned from the chase, and it was determined to abandon the castle, and join the party on the land, Hutter was simply scalped, to secure the usual trophy, and was left to die by inches, as has been done in a thousand similar instances, by the ruthless warriors of this part of the American continent. Had the injury of Hutter been confined to his head, he might have recovered, however, for it was the blow of the knife that proved mortal.

There are moments of vivid consciousness when

the stern justice of God stands forth in colours so prominent, as to defy any attempts to veil them from the sight, however unpleasant they may appear, or however anxious we may be to avoid recognising it. Such was now the fact with Judith and Hetty, who both perceived the decrees of a retributive Providence, in the manner of their father's suffering, as a punishment for his own recent attempts on the Iroquois. This was seen and felt by Judith, with the keenness of perception and sensibility that were suited to her character; while the impression made on the simpler mind of her sister was perhaps less lively, though it might well have proved more lasting.

"Oh! Judith," exclaimed the weak-minded girl, as soon as their first care had been bestowed on the sufferer. "Father went for scalps, himself, and now where is his own? The Bible might have foretold this dreadful punishment!"

"Hush—Hetty—hush, poor sister—he opens his eyes; he may hear and understand you. 'Tis as you say and think; but 'tis too dreadful to speak of!"

"Water—" ejaculated Hutter, as it might be by a desperate effort, that rendered his voice frightfully deep and strong, for one as near death as he evidently was—"water—foolish girls—will you let me die of thirst?"

Water was brought and administered to the sufferer; the first he had tasted in hours of physical anguish. It had the double effect of clearing his throat, and of momentarily reviving his sinking system. His eyes opened with that anxious, distended gaze, which is apt to accompany the passage of a soul surprised by death, and he seemed disposed to speak.

"Father—" said Judith, inexpressibly pained by his deplorable situation, and this so much the more from her ignorance of what remedies ought to be applied—"Father, can we do any thing for you? Can Hetty and I relieve your pain?"

"Father!" slowly repeated the old man. "No, Judith—no, Hetty—I'm no father. *She* was your mother, but I'm no father. Look in the chest—'tis all there—give me more water."

The girls complied; and Judith, whose early recollections extended farther back than her sister's, and who on every account, had more distinct impressions of the past, felt an uncontrollable impulse of joy, as she heard these words. There had never been much sympathy between her reputed father and herself, and suspicions of this very truth had often glanced across her mind, in consequence of dialogues she had overheard between Hutter and her mother. It might be going too far to say she had never loved him; but

it is not so to add, that she rejoiced it was no longer a duty. With Hetty the feeling was different. Incapable of making all the distinctions of her sister, her very nature was full of affection, and she *had* loved her reputed parent, though far less tenderly than the real parent; and it grieved her, now, to hear him declare he was not naturally entitled to that love. She felt a double grief, as if his death and his words together, were twice depriving her of parents. Yielding to her feelings, the poor girl went aside and wept.

The very opposite emotions of the two girls, kept both silent for a long time. Judith gave water to the sufferer frequently, but she forbore to urge him with questions, in some measure out of consideration for his condition; but, if truth must be said, quite as much lest something he should add, in the way of explanation, might disturb her pleasing belief that she was not Thomas Hutter's child. At length Hetty dried her tears, and came and seated herself on a stool by the side of the dying man, who had been placed at his length on the floor, with his head supported by some worn vestments that had been left in the house.

"Father," she said, "you will let me *call* you father, though you say you are not one—Father, shall I read the Bible to you—mother always said

the Bible was good for people in trouble. She was often in trouble herself, and then she made me read the Bible to her; for Judith wasn't as fond of the Bible as I am—and it always did her good. Many is the time I've known mother begin to listen with the tears streaming from her eyes, and end with smiles and gladness. Oh! father, you don't know how much good the Bible can do, for you've never tried it;— now, I'll read a chapter and it will soften your heart, as it softened the hearts of the Hurons."

While poor Hetty had so much reverence for, and faith in, the virtue of the Bible, her intellect was too shallow to enable her fully to appreciate its beauties, or to fathom its profound, and sometimes mysterious wisdom. That instinctive sense of right, which appeared to shield her from the commission of wrong, and even cast a mantle of moral loveliness and truth around her character, could not penetrate abstrusities, or trace the nice affinities between cause and effect, beyond their more obvious and indisputable connection, though she seldom failed to see all the latter, and to defer to all their just consequences. In a word, she was one of those who feel and act correctly, without being able to give a logical reason for it, even admitting revelation as her authority. Her selections from the Bible, therefore, were commonly

distinguished by the simplicity of her own mind, and were oftener marked for containing images of known and palpable things, than for any of the higher cast of moral truths with which the pages of that wonderful book abound—wonderful, and unequalled, even without referring to its divine origin, as a work replete with the profoundest philosophy, expressed in the noblest language. Her mother, with a connection that will probably strike the reader, had been fond of the book of Job; and Hetty had, in a great measure, learned to read by the frequent lessons she had received from the different chapters of this venerable and sublime poem—now believed to be the oldest book in the world. On this occasion, the poor girl was submissive to her training, and she turned to that well-known part of the sacred volume, with the readiness with which the practised counsel would cite his authorities from the stores of legal wisdom. In selecting the particular chapter, she was influenced by the caption, and she chose that which stands in our English version as, "*Job excuseth his desire of death.*" This she read steadily, from beginning to end, in a sweet, low, and plaintive voice; hoping devoutly that the allegorical and abstruse sentences might convey to the heart of the sufferer the consolation he needed. It

is another peculiarity of the comprehensive wisdom of the Bible, that scarce a chapter, unless it be strictly narrative, can be turned to that does not contain some searching truth that is applicable to the condition of every human heart, as well as to the temporal state of its owner, either through the workings of that heart, or even in a still more direct form. In this instance, the very opening sentence,—"*Is there not an appointed time to man on earth?*"—was startling; and as Hetty proceeded, Hutter applied, or fancied he could apply many aphorisms and figures to his own worldly and mental condition. As life is ebbing fast, the mind clings eagerly to hope, when it is not absolutely crushed by despair. The solemn words,—"*I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself?*" struck Hutter more perceptibly than the others; and, though too obscure for one of his blunted feelings and obtuse mind either to feel or to comprehend in their fullest extent, they had a directness of application to his own state that caused him to wince under them.

"Don't you feel better now, father!" asked Hetty, closing the volume. "Mother was always better when she had read the Bible."

"Water," returned Hutter; "give me water, Judith. I wonder if my tongue will always be so hot! Hetty, isn't there something in the Bible about cooling the tongue of a man who was burning in hell-fire?"

Judith turned away, shocked; but Hetty eagerly sought the passage, which she read aloud to the conscience-stricken victim of his own avaricious longings.

"That's it, poor Hetty; yes, that's it. My tongue wants cooling, *now*; what will it be *hereafter?*"

This appeal silenced even the confiding Hetty, for she had no answer ready for a confession so fraught with despair. Water, so long as it could relieve the sufferer, it was in the power of the sisters to give; and, from time to time, it was offered to the lips of the sufferer as he asked for it. Even Judith prayed. As for Hetty, as soon as she found that her efforts to make her father listen to her texts were no longer rewarded with success, she knelt at his side, and devoutly repeated the words which the Saviour has left behind him as a model for human petitions. This she continued to do, at intervals, as long as it seemed to her that the act could benefit the dying man. Hutter, however, lingered longer than the girls had believed

possible, when they first found him. At times he spoke intelligibly, though his lips oftener moved in utterance of sounds that carried no distinct impressions to the mind. Judith listened intently, and she heard the words "husband," "death," "pirate," "law," "scalps," and several others of a similar import, though there was no sentence to tell the precise connection in which they were used. Still they were sufficiently expressive to be understood by one whose ears had not escaped all the rumours that had been circulated to her reputed father's discredit, and whose comprehension was as quick as her faculties were attentive.

During the whole of the painful hour that succeeded, neither of the sisters bethought her sufficiently of the Hurons to dread their return. It seemed as if their desolation and grief placed them above the danger of such an interruption; and when the sound of oars was at length heard, even Judith, who alone had any reason to apprehend the enemy, did not start, but at once understood that the ark was near. She went upon the platform fearlessly; for, should it turn out that Hurry was not there, and that the Hurons were masters of the scow, also, escape was impossible. Then she had the sort of confidence that is inspired by extreme misery.

But there was no cause for any new alarm—Chingachgook, Hist, and Hurry all standing in the open part of the scow, cautiously examining the building, to make certain of the absence of the enemy. They, too, had seen the departure of the Hurons, as well as the approach of the canoe of the girls to the castle, and, presuming on the latter fact, March had swept the scow up to the platform. A word sufficed to explain that there was nothing to be apprehended, and the ark was soon moored in her old berth.

Judith said not a word concerning the condition of her father, but Hurry knew her too well not to understand that something was more than usually wrong. He led the way, though with less of his confident bold manner than usual, into the house, and penetrating to the inner room, found Hutter lying on his back, with Hetty sitting at his side, fanning him with pious care. The events of the morning had sensibly changed the manner of Hurry. Notwithstanding his skill as a swimmer, and the readiness with which he had adopted the only expedient that could possibly save him, the helplessness of being in the water, bound hand and foot, had produced some such effect on him as the near approach of punishment is known to produce on most criminals, leaving a vivid impression

of the horrors of death upon his mind, and this, too, in connection with a picture of bodily helplessness; the daring of this man being far more the offspring of vast physical powers than of the energy of the will, or even of natural spirit. Such heroes invariably lose a large portion of their courage with the failure of their strength; and, though Hurry was now unfettered, and as vigorous as ever, events were too recent to permit the recollection of his late deplorable condition to be at all weakened. Had he lived a century, the occurrences of the few momentous minutes during which he was in the lake, would have produced a chastening effect on his character, if not always on his manner.

Hurry was not only shocked when he found his late associate in this desperate situation, but he was greatly surprised. During the struggle in the building, he had been far too much occupied himself to learn what had befallen his comrade, and, as no deadly weapon had been used in his particular case, but every effort had been made to capture him without injury, he naturally believed that Hutter had been overcome, while he owed his own escape to his great bodily strength, and to a fortunate concurrence of extraordinary circumstances. Death, in the silence and solemnity of a chamber, was a

novelty to him. Though accustomed to scenes of violence, he had been unused to sit by the bed-side and watch the slow beating of the pulse as it gradually grew weaker and weaker. Notwithstanding the change in his feelings, the manners of a life could not be altogether cast aside in a moment, and the unexpected scene extorted a characteristic speech from the borderer.

"How now! Old Tom," he said, "have the vagabonds got you at an advantage, where you're not only down, but are likely to be kept down! I thought you a captyve it's true, but never supposed you as hard run as this!"

Hutter opened his glassy eyes and stared wildly at the speaker. A flood of confused recollections rushed on his wavering mind at the sight of his late comrade. It was evident that he struggled with his own images, and knew not the real from the unreal.

"Who are you?" he asked in a husky whisper, his failing strength refusing to aid him in a louder effort of his voice. "Who are you?—You look like the mate of the Snow—he was a giant, too, and near overcoming us."

"I'm your mate, Floating Tom, and your comrade, but have nothing to do with any snow. It's summer now, and Harry March always quits

the hills as soon after the frosts set in as is convenient."

"I know you—Hurry Skurry—I'll sell you a scalp!—a sound one, and of a full-grown man; —what'll you give?"

"Poor Tom! That scalp business hasn't turned out at all profitable, and I've pretty much concluded to give it up, and to follow a less bloody calling."

"Have you got any scalp? Mine's gone—How does it feel to have a scalp?—I know how it feels to lose one—fire and flames about the brain—and a wrenching at the heart—no, no—kill *first*, Hurry, and scalp *afterwards*."

"What does the old fellow mean, Judith? He talks like one that is getting tired of the business as well as myself. Why have you bound up his head? or, have the savages tomahawked him about the brains?"

"They have done that for *him*, which you and he, Harry March, would have so gladly done for *them*. His skin and hair have been torn from his head to gain money from the governor of Canada, as you would have torn theirs from the heads of the Hurons, to gain money from the governor of York."

Judith spoke with a strong effort to appear composed, but it was neither in her nature,

nor in the feeling of the moment to speak altogether without bitterness. The strength of her emphasis, indeed, as well as her manner, caused Hetty to look up reproachfully.

"These are high words to come from Thomas Hutter's darter, as Thomas Hutter lies dying before her eyes," retorted Hurry.

"God be praised for that!—whatever reproach it may bring on my poor mother, I am *not* Thomas Hutter's daughter."

"Not Thomas Hutter's darter!—Don't disown the old fellow in his last moments, Judith; for *that's* a sin the Lord will never overlook. If you're not Thomas Hutter's darter, whose darter be you?"

This question rebuked the rebellious spirit of Judith; for, in getting rid of a parent, whom she felt it was a relief to find she might own she had never loved, she overlooked the important circumstance that no substitute was ready to supply his place.

"I cannot tell you, Harry, who my father was," she answered more mildly; "I hope he was an honest man, at least."

"Which is more than you think was the case with old Hutter? Well, Judith, I'll not deny that hard stories were in circulation consarning Floating Tom, but who is there that doesn't get

a scratch when an inimy holds the rake? There's them that say hard things of *me*; and even *you*, beauty as you be, don't always escape."

This was said with a view to set up a species of community of character between the parties, and, as the politicians of the day are wont to express it, with ulterior intentions. What might have been the consequences with one of Judith's known spirit, as well as her assured antipathy to the speaker, it is not easy to say; for, just then, Hutter gave unequivocal signs that his last moment was nigh. Judith and Hetty had stood by the dying bed of their mother, and neither needed a monitor to warn them of the crisis, and every sign of resentment vanished from the face of the first. Hutter opened his eyes, and even tried to feel about him with a hand, a sign that sight was failing. A minute later his breathing grew ghastly; a pause totally without respiration followed; and then succeeded the last long-drawn sigh, on which the spirit is supposed to quit the body. This sudden termination of the life of one who had hitherto filled so important a place in the narrow scene on which he had been an actor, put an end to all discussion.

The day passed by without further interruption, the Hurons though possessed of a canoe,

appearing so far satisfied with their success as to have relinquished all immediate designs on the castle. It would not have been a safe undertaking, indeed, to approach it under the rifles of those it was now known to contain, and it is probable that the truce was more owing to this circumstance than to any other. In the meanwhile, the preparations were made for the interment of Hutter. To bury him on the land was impracticable, and it was Hetty's wish that his body should lie by the side of that of her mother in the lake. She had it in her power to quote one of his speeches in which he himself had called the lake the "family burying-ground," and luckily this was done without the knowledge of her sister, who would have opposed the plan, had she known it, with unconquerable disgust. But Judith had not meddled with the arrangement, and every necessary disposition was made without her privity or advice.

The hour chosen for the rude ceremony, was just as the sun was setting, and a moment and a scene more suited to paying the last office to one of calm and pure spirit, could not have been chosen. There are a mystery and a solemn dignity in death, that dispose the living to regard the remains of even a malefactor with a certain degree of reverence. All worldly dis-

tinctions have ceased; it is thought that the veil has been removed, and that the character and destiny of the departed are now as much beyond human opinions, as they are beyond human ken. In nothing is death more truly a leveller than in this, since, while it may be impossible absolutely to confound the great with the low, the worthy with the unworthy, the mind feels it to be arrogance to assume a right to judge of those who are believed to be standing at the judgment-seat of God. When Judith was told that all was ready, she went upon the platform, passive to the request of her sister, and then she first took heed of the arrangement. The body was in the scow, enveloped in a sheet, and quite a hundred-weight of stones, that had been taken from the fire-place, were enclosed with it, in order that it might sink. No other preparation seemed to be thought necessary, though Hetty carried her Bible beneath her arm.

When all were on board the ark, this singular habitation of the man whose body it now bore to his final abode, was set in motion. Hurry was at the oars. In his powerful hands, indeed, they seemed little more than a pair of sculls, which were wielded without effort, and, as he was expert in their use, the Delaware

remained a passive spectator of the proceedings. The progress of the ark had something of the stately solemnity of a funeral procession, the dip of the oars being measured, and the movement slow and steady. The wash of the water, as the blades rose and fell, kept time with the efforts of Hurry, and might have been likened to the measured tread of mourners. Then the tranquil scene was in beautiful accordance with a rite that ever associates with itself the idea of God. At that instant, the lake had not even a single ripple on its glassy surface, and the broad panorama of woods seemed to look down on the holy tranquillity of the hour and ceremony in melancholy stillness. Judith was affected to tears, and even Hurry, though he hardly knew why, was troubled. Hetty preserved the outward signs of tranquillity, but her inward grief greatly surpassed that of her sister, since her affectionate heart loved more from habit and long association, than from the usual connections of sentiment and taste. She was sustained by religious hope, however, which in her simple mind usually occupied the space that worldly feelings filled in that of Judith; and she was not without an expectation of witnessing some open manifestation of divine power, on an occasion so solemn. Still, she was neither mystical

nor exaggerated, her mental imbecility denying both. Nevertheless her thoughts had generally so much of the purity of a better world about them, that it was easy for her to forget earth altogether, and to think only of heaven. Hist was serious, attentive and interested, for she had often seen the interment of the pale-faces, though never one that promised to be as peculiar as this; while the Delaware, though grave, and also observant in his demeanour, was stoical and calm.

Hetty acted as pilot, directing Hurry how to proceed to find that spot in the lake, which she was in the habit of terming "mother's grave." The reader will remember that the castle stood near the southern extremity of a shoal that extended near half a mile northerly, and it was at the farthest end of this shallow water that Floating Tom had seen fit to deposit the remains of his wife and child. His own were now in the course of being placed at their side. Hetty had marks on the land by which she usually found the spot, although the position of the buildings, the general direction of the shoal, and the beautiful transparency of the water, all aided her, the latter even allowing the bottom to be seen. By these means, the girl was enabled to note their progress, and at the proper time she approached March, whispering—

"Now, Hurry, you can stop rowing. We have passed the stone on the bottom, and mother's grave is near."

March ceased his efforts, immediately dropping the kedge and taking the warp in his hand, in order to check the scow. The ark turned slowly round under this restraint, and when it was quite stationary, Hetty was seen at its stern, pointing into the water, the tears streaming from her eyes in ungovernable natural feeling. Judith had been present at the interment of her mother, but she had never visited the spot since. This neglect proceeded from no indifference to the memory of the deceased; for she had loved her *mother*, and bitterly had she found occasion to mourn her loss; but she was averse to the contemplation of death, and there had been passages in her own life since the day of that interment, which increased this feeling, and rendered her if possible still more reluctant to approach the spot that contained the remains of one whose severe lessons of female morality and propriety had been deepened and rendered doubly impressive by remorse for her own failings. With Hetty the case had been very different. To her simple and innocent mind, the remembrance of her mother brought no other feeling than one of gentle sorrow; a grief that is so often termed luxurious, even because it asso-

ciates with itself the images of excellence, and the purity of a better state of existence. For an entire summer she had been in the habit of repairing to the place after night-fall; and carefully anchoring her canoe so as not to disturb the body, she would sit and hold fancied conversations with the deceased, sing sweet hymns to the evening air, and repeat the orisons that the being who now slumbered below had taught her in infancy. Hetty had passed her happiest hours in this indirect communion with the spirit of her mother; the wildness of Indian traditions and Indian opinions, unconsciously to herself, mingling with the Christian lore received in childhood. Once she had even been so far influenced by the former as to have bethought her of performing some of those physical rites at her mother's grave, which the red men are known to observe; but the passing feeling had been obscured by the steady, though mild, light of Christianity, which never ceased to burn in her gentle bosom. Now, her emotions were merely the natural outpourings of a daughter that wept for a mother whose love was indelibly impressed on the heart, and whose lessons had been too earnestly taught to be easily forgotten by one who had so little temptation to err.

There was no other priest than nature at that wild and singular funeral rite. March cast his

eyes below, and through the transparent medium of the clear water, which was almost as pure as air, he saw what Hetty was accustomed to call "mother's grave." It was a low straggling mound of earth, fashioned by no spade, out of a corner of which gleamed a bit of the white cloth that formed the shroud of the dead. The body had been lowered to the bottom, and Hutter brought earth from the shore and let it fall upon it, until all was concealed. In this state, the place had remained, until the movement of the waters had revealed the solitary sign of the uses of the spot that has just been mentioned. Even the most rude and brawling are chastened by the ceremonies of a funeral. March felt no desire to indulge his voice in any of its coarse outbreakings, and was disposed to complete the office he had undertaken in decent sobriety. Perhaps he reflected on the retribution that had alighted on his late comrade, and bethought him of the frightful jeopardy in which his own life had so lately been placed. He signified to Judith that all was ready, received her directions to proceed, and with no other assistant than his own vast strength, raised the body and bore it to the end of the scow. Two parts of a rope were passed beneath the legs and shoulders, as they are placed benetah coffins, and then the corpse was slowly lowered beneath the surface of the lake.

"Not *there*—Harry March—no, not *there*," said Judith, shuddering involuntarily; "do not lower it quite so near the spot where mother lies."

"Why not, Judith?" asked Hetty, earnestly. "They lived together in life, and should lie together in death."

"No—no—Harry March, farther off—farther off.—Poor Hetty, you know not what you say.—Leave me to order this."

"I know I am weak-minded, Judith, and that you are clever—but, surely a husband should be placed near a wife. Mother always said that this was the way they bury in Christian church-yards."

This little controversy was conducted earnestly, but in smothered voices, as if the speakers feared that the dead might overhear them. Judith could not contend with her sister at such a moment, but a significant gesture from her induced March to lower the body at a little distance from that of his wife; when he withdrew the cords, and the act was performed,

"There's an end of Floating Tom!" exclaimed Hurry, bending over the scow, and gazing through the water at the body. "He was a brave companion on a scout, and a notable hand with traps. Don't weep, Judith—don't be overcome, Hetty, for the righteousest of us all must die; and when the time comes, lamentations and tears

can't bring the dead to life. Your father will be a loss to you, no doubt; most fathers are a loss, especially to onmarried darters; but there's a way to cure that evil, and you're both too young and handsome to live long without finding it out. When it's agreeable to hear what an honest and onpretending man has to say, Judith, I should like to talk a little with you, apart."

Judith had scarce attended to this rude attempt of Hurry's at consolation, although she necessarily understood its general drift, and had a tolerably accurate notion of its manner. She was weeping at the recollection of her mother's early tenderness, and painful images of long-forgotten lessons and neglected precepts were crowding her mind. The words of Hurry, however, recalled her to the present time, and abrupt and unseasonable as was their import, they did not produce those signs of distaste that one might have expected from the girl's character. On the contrary, she appeared to be struck with some sudden idea, gazed intently for a moment at the young man, dried her eyes, and led the way to the other end of the scow, signifying her wish for him to follow. Here she took a seat, and motioned for March to place himself at her side. The decision and earnestness with which all this was done, a little intimidated her companion, and

Judith found it necessary to open the subject herself.

"You wish to speak to me of marriage, Harry March," she said, "and I have come here, over the grave of my parents, as it might be—no, no —over the grave of my poor, dear, dear, mother, to hear what you have to say."

"This is oncommon, and you have a skearful way with you, this evening, Judith," answered Hurry, more disturbed than he would have cared to own; "but truth is truth, and it shall come out, let what will follow. You well know, gal, that I've long thought you the comeliest young woman my eyes ever beheld, and that I've made no secret of that fact, either here on the lake, out among the hunters and trappers, or in the settlements."

"Yes—yes, I've heard this before, and I suppose it to be true," answered Judith, with a sort of feverish impatience.

"When a young man holds such language of any particular young woman, it's reasonable to calculate he sets store by her."

"True—true, Hurry—all this you've told me, again and again."

"Well, if it's agreeable, I should think a woman couldn't hear it too often. They all tell me this is the way with your sex—that nothing pleases

them more than to repeat over and over, for the hundredth time, how much you like 'em, unless it be to talk to 'em of their good looks!"

"No doubt—we like both, on most occasions; but this is an uncommon moment, Hurry, and vain words should not be too freely used. I would rather hear you speak plainly."

"You shall have your own way, Judith, and I some suspect you always will. I've often told you that I not only like you better than any other young woman going, or, for that matter, better than *all* the young women going; but you must have obsarved, Judith, that I've never asked you, in up and down tarms, to marry me."

"I have observed both," returned the girl, a smile struggling about her beautiful mouth, in spite of the singular and engrossing intentness which caused her cheeks to flush, and lighted her eyes with a brilliancy that was almost dazzling —"I have observed both, and have thought the last remarkable for a man of Harry March's decision and fearlessness."

"There's been a reason, gal, and it's one that troubles me even now—nay, don't flush up so, and look fiery-like, for there are thoughts which will stick long in any man's mind, as there be words that will stick in his throat—but then, ag'in, there's feelin's that will get the better of

'em all, and to these feelin's I find I must submit. You've no longer a father, or a mother, Judith; and it's morally impossible that you and Hetty could live here, alone, allowing it was peace, and the Iroquois was quiet; but as matters stand, not only would you starve, but you'd both be prisoners, or scalped, afore a week was out. It's time to think of a change and a husband, and if you'll accept of me, all that's past shall be forgotten, and there's an end on't."

Judith had difficulty in repressing her impatience until this rude declaration and offer were made, which she evidently wished to hear, and which she now listened to with a willingness that might well have excited hope. She hardly allowed the young man to conclude, so eager was she to bring him to the point, and so ready to answer.

"There, Hurry, that's enough," she said, raising a hand, as if to stop him; "I understand you as well as if you were to talk a month. You prefer me to other girls, and you wish me to become your wife."

"You put it in better words than I can do, Judith, and I wish you to fancy them said, just as you most like to hear 'em."

"They're plain enough, Hurry, and 'tis fitting they should be so. This is no place to trifle or deceive in. Now, listen to my answer, which

shall be, in every tittle, as sincere as your offer. There is a reason, March, why I should never—"

"I suppose I understand you, Judith; but if I'm willing to overlook that reason, it's no one's consarn but mine. Now don't brighten up like the sky at sundown; for no offence is meant, and none should be taken."

"I do not brighten up, and will *not* take offence," said Judith, struggling to repress her indignation in a way she had never found it necessary to exert before. "There is a reason why I should not, *can* not, ever be your wife, Hurry, that you seem to overlook, and which it is my duty now to tell you, as plainly as you have asked me to consent to become so. I do not, and I am certain that I never shall love you well enough to marry you. No man can wish for a wife who does not prefer him to all other men; and when I tell you this frankly, I suppose you yourself will thank me for my sincerity."

"O Judith, them flaunting, gay, scarlet-coated officers of the garrisons have done all this mischief!"

"Hush, March; do not calumniate a daughter over her mother's grave! Do not, when I only wish to treat you fairly, give me reason to call for evil on your head in bitterness of heart! Do not forget that I am a woman, and that you are a man;

that I have neither father nor brother to revenge your words."

"Well, there is something in the last, and I'll say no more. Take time, Judith, and think better of this."

"I want no time; my mind has long been made up, and I have only waited for you to speak plainly to answer plainly. We now understand each other, and there is no use in saying any more."

The impetuous earnestness of the girl awed the young man, for never before had he seen her so serious and determined. In most of their previous interviews she had met his advances with evasion, or sarcasm; but these Hurry had mistaken for female coquetry, and had supposed might easily be converted into consent. The struggle had been with himself, about offering; nor had he ever seriously believed it possible, that Judith would refuse to become the wife of the handsomest man on all that frontier. Now that the refusal came, and that in terms so decided as to put all cavilling out of the question, if not absolutely dumfounded, he was so much mortified and surprised, as to feel no wish to attempt to change her resolution.

"The Glimmerglass has now no great call for me," he exclaimed, after a minute's silence.

"Old Tom is gone, the Hurons are as plenty on shore, as pigeons in the woods; and altogether, it is getting to be an onsuitable place."

"Then leave it. You see it is surrounded by dangers, and there is no reason why you should risk your life for others. Nor do I know that you can be of any service to us. Go, to-night; we'll never accuse you of having done any thing forgetful, or unmanly."

"If I do go, 't will be with a heavy heart on your account, Judith; I would rather take you with me."

"That is not to be spoken of any longer, March; but, I will land you in one of the canoes, as soon as it is dark, and you can strike a trail for the nearest garrison. When you reach the fort, if you send a party——"

Judith smothered the words, for she felt that it was humiliating to be thus exposing herself to the comments and reflections of one who was not disposed to view her conduct in connection with all in these garrisons with an eye of favour. Hurry, however, caught the idea; and, without perverting it, as the girl dreaded, he answered to the purpose.

"I understand *what* you would say, and *why* you don't say it," he replied. "If I get safe to the fort, a party shall start on the trail of these

vagabonds, and I'll come with it myself; for I should like to see you and Hetty, in a place of safety before we part for ever."

"Ah, Harry March, had you always spoken thus, felt thus, my feelings towards you might have been different!"

"Is it too late, now, Judith? I'm rough, and a woodsman; but we all change under different treatment from what we have been used to."

"It *is* too late, March. I can never feel towards you, or any other man but *one*, as you would wish to have me. There, I've said enough, surely, and you will question me no further. As soon as it is dark, I, or the Delaware, will put you on the shore; you will make the best of your way to the Mohawk, and the nearest garrison, and send all you can to our assistance. And, Hurry, we are now friends, and I may trust you, may I not?"

"Sartain, Judith; though our fri'ndship would have been all the warmer, could you look upon me, as I look upon you."

Judith hesitated, and some powerful emotion was struggling within her. Then, as if determined to look down all weaknesses, and accomplish her purposes, at every hazard, she spoke more plainly.

"You will find a captain of the name of Warley, at the nearest post," she said, pale as death, and

even trembling as she spoke; "I think it likely he will wish to head the party; I would greatly prefer it should be another. If Captain Warley *can* be kept back, 't would make me very happy!"

"That's easier said than done, Judith; for these officers do pretty much as they please. The major will order, and captains, and lieutenants, and ensigns must obey. I know the officer you mean, a red-faced, gay, oh!-be-joyful sort of a gentleman, who swallows Madeira enough to drown the Mohawk, and yet a pleasant talker. All the gals in the valley admire him; and they say he admires all the gals. I don't wonder he is your dislike, Judith, for he's a very gineral lover, if he isn't a gineral officer."

Judith did not answer, though her frame shook, and her colour changed from pale to crimson, and from crimson back again to the hue of death.

"Alas! my poor mother!" she ejaculated mentally, instead of uttering it aloud; "we are over thy grave, but little dost thou know how much thy lessons have been forgotten; thy care neglected; thy love defeated!"

As this goading of the worm that never dies was felt, she arose, and signified to Hurry that she had no more to communicate.

CHAPTER II.

"——That point
In misery, which makes the oppressed man
Regardless of his own life, makes him too
Lord of the oppressor's——"

COLERIDGE.

All this time Hetty had remained seated in the head of the scow, looking sorrowfully into the water, which held the body of her mother, as well as that of the man whom she had been taught to consider her father. Hist stood near her in gentle quiet, but had no consolation to offer in words. The habits of her people taught her reserve in this respect; and the habits of her sex induced her to wait patiently for a moment when she might manifest some soothing sympathy by means of acts, rather than speech. Chingachgook held himself a little aloof, in grave reserve, looking like a warrior, but feeling like a man.

Judith joined her sister with an air of dignity and solemnity it was not her practice to show; and, though the gleamings of anguish were still

visible on her beautiful face, when she spoke it was firmly and without tremour. At that instant, Hist and the Delaware withdrew, moving towards Hurry in the other end of the boat.

"Sister," said Judith, kindly, "I have much to say to you; we will get into this canoe, and paddle off to a distance from the ark—the secrets of two orphans ought not to be heard by every ear."

"Certainly, Judith, by the ears of their parents. Let Hurry lift the grapnel, and move away with the ark, and leave us here, near the graves of father and mother, to say what we may have to say."

"Father!" repeated Judith, slowly, the blood for the first time since her parting with March, mounting to her cheeks; "he was no father of ours, Hetty! *That* we had from his own mouth, and in his dying moments."

"Are you glad, Judith, to find you had no father! He took care of us, and fed us, and clothed us, and loved us; a father could have done no more. I don't understand why he wasn't a father."

"Never mind, dear child, but let us do as you have said. It may be well to remain here, and let the ark move a little away. Do you prepare the canoe, and I will tell Hurry and the Indians our wishes."

This was soon and simply done; the ark moving with measured strokes of the sweeps, a hundred yards from the spot, leaving the girls floating, seemingly in air, above the place of the dead; so buoyant was the light vessel that held them, and so limpid the element by which it was sustained.

"The death of Thomas Hutter," Judith commenced, after a short pause had prepared her sister to receive her communications, "has altered all our prospects, Hetty. If he was *not* our father, we are *sisters*, and must feel alike and live together."

"How do I know, Judith, that you wouldn't be as glad to find I am not your sister, as you are in finding that Thomas Hutter, as you call him, was not your father. I am only half-witted, and few people like to have half-witted relations; and then I'm not handsome—at least, not as handsome as you—and you may wish a handsomer sister."

"No, no, Hetty. *You* and you only are my sister—my heart, and my love for you, tell me that—and mother was my mother—of that, too, am I glad, and proud; for she was a mother to be proud of—but father was not father!"

"Hush, Judith! His spirit may be near; it would grieve it to hear his children talking so, and

that, too, over his very grave. Children should never grieve parents, mother often told me, and especially when they are dead!"

"Poor Hetty! They are happily removed beyond all cares on our accounts. Nothing that *I* can do or say will cause mother any sorrow *now* —there is some consolation in that, at least!— and nothing *you* can say or do will make her smile, as she used to smile on your good conduct, when living."

"You don't know that, Judith. Spirits can see, and mother may see as well as any spirit. She always told us that God saw all we did, and that we should do nothing to offend *him*; and now *she* has left us, I strive to do nothing that can displease *her*. Think how her spirit would mourn and feel sorrow, Judith, did it see either of us doing what is not right, and spirits *may* see, after all; especially the spirits of parents that feel anxious about their children."

"Hetty, Hetty—you know not what you say!" murmured Judith, almost livid with emotion. "The dead *cannot* see, and know nothing of what passes here! But, we will not talk of this any longer. The bodies of mother and Thomas Hutter lie together in the lake, and we will hope that the spirits of both are with God. That we, the children of one of them, remain on earth, is cer-

tain; it is now proper to know what we are to do in future."

"If we are not Thomas Hutter's children, Judith, no one will dispute our right to his property. We have the castle and the ark, and the canoes, and the woods, and the lakes, the same as when he was living; and what can prevent us from staying here, and passing our lives just as we ever have done."

"No, no—poor sister. This can no longer be. Two girls would not be safe here, even should these Hurons fail in getting us into their power. Even father had as much as he could sometimes do to keep peace upon the lake; and we should fail altogether. We must quit this spot, Hetty, and remove into the settlements."

"I am sorry you think so, Judith," returned Hetty, dropping her head on her bosom, and looking thoughtfully down at the spot where the funeral pile of her mother could just be seen. "I am *very* sorry to hear it. I would rather stay here, where, if I wasn't born, I've passed my life. I don't like the settlements—they are full of wickedness and heart-burnings, while God dwells unoffended in these hills! I love the trees, and the mountains, and the lake, and the springs; all that his bounty has given us, and it would grieve me sorely, Judith, to be forced to quit them. You

are handsome, and not at all half-witted, and one day you will marry, and then you will have a husband, and I a brother, to take care of us, if women can't really take care of themselves in such a place as this."

"Ah! if this *could* be so, Hetty, then indeed I could *now* be a thousand times happier in these woods than in the settlements! *Once* I did not feel thus, but *now* I do. Yet where is the man to turn this beautiful place into such a garden of Eden for us?"

"Harry March loves you, sister," returned poor Hetty, unconsciously picking the bark off the canoe as she spoke. "He would be glad to be your husband, I'm sure; and a stouter and a braver youth is not to be met with the whole country round."

"Harry March and I understand each other, and no more need be said about *him*. There is one—but no matter. It is all in the hands of Providence, an we must shortly come to some conclusion about our future manner of living. Remain here—that is, remain here, alone, we cannot—and perhaps no occasion will ever offer for remaining in the manner you think of. It is time, too, Hetty, we should learn all we can concerning our relations and family. It is not probable we are altogether without relations, and they may be glad to see us. The old chest is now

our property, and we have a right to look into it, and learn all we can by what it holds. Mother was so very different from Thomas Hutter, that, now I know we are not his children, I burn with a desire to know whose children we can be. There are papers in that chest, I am certain, and those papers may tell us all about our parents and natural friends."

"Well, Judith, you know best, for you are cleverer than common, mother always said, and I am only half-witted. Now father and mother are dead, I don't much care for any relations but you, and don't think I could love them I never saw, as well as I ought. If you don't like to marry Hurry, I don't see who you can choose for a husband, and then I fear we shall have to quit the lake, after all."

"What do you think of Deerslayer, Hetty?" asked Judith, bending forward like her unsophisticated sister, and endeavouring to conceal her embarrassment in a similar manner. "Would he not make a brother-in-law to your liking?"

"Deerslayer!" repeated the other, looking up in unfeigned surprise; "why, Judith, Deerslayer isn't in the least comely, and is altogether unfit for one like you!"

"He is not ill-looking, Hetty; and beauty in a man is not of much matter."

"Do you think so, Judith? I know that beauty

is of no great matter, in man or woman, in the eyes of God; for mother has often told me so, when she thought I might have been sorry I was not as handsome as you,—though she needn't have been uneasy on that account, for I never coveted any thing that is yours, sister; but tell me so she did;—still, beauty is very pleasant to the eye in both. I think, if I were a man, I should pine more for good looks than I do as a girl. A handsome man is a more pleasing sight than a handsome woman."

"Poor child! you scarce know what you say, or what you mean! Beauty in our sex *is* something, but in man it passes for little. To be sure, a man ought to be tall, but others are tall as well as Hurry; and active—I think I know those that are more active; and strong—well, he hasn't all the strength in the world; and brave—I am certain I can name a youth who is braver!"

"This is strange, Judith. I didn't think the earth held a handsomer, or a stronger, or a more active, or a braver man than Harry Hurry! I am sure *I* never met his equal in either of these things."

"Well, well, Hetty—say no more of this. I dislike to hear *you* talking in this manner. 'Tis not suitable to your innocence, and truth, and warm-hearted sincerity. Let Harry March go.

He quits us to-night, and no regret of mine will follow him, unless it be that he has staid so long, and to so little purpose."

"Ah! Judith, this is what I've long feared; and I did *so* hope he might be my brother-in-law!"

"Never mind it now; let us talk of our poor mother, and of Thomas Hutter."

"Speak kindly, then, sister, for you can't be quite certain that spirits don't both hear and see. If father wasn't father, he was good to us, and gave us food and shelter. We can't put any stones over their graves, here in the water, to tell people all this, and so we ought to say it with our tongues."

"They will care little for that, girl. 'Tis a great consolation to know, Hetty, that if mother ever did commit any heavy fault when young, that she lived sincerely to repent of it; no doubt her sins were forgiven her."

"'Tisn't right, Judith, for children to talk of their parent's sins. We had better talk of our own."

"Talk of your sins, Hetty! If there ever was a creature on earth without sin, it is you! I wish I could say or think the same of myself; but we shall see. No one knows what changes affection for a good husband can make in a woman's heart.

I don't think, child, I have even now the same love for finery I once had."

"It would be a pity, Judith, if you did think of clothes over your parents' graves! We will never quit this spot, if you say so, and will let Hurry go where he pleases."

"I am willing enough to consent to the last, but cannot answer for the first, Hetty. We must live, in future, as becomes respectable young women, and cannot remain here to be the talk and jest of all the rude and foul-tongued trappers and hunters that may come upon the lake. Let Hurry go by himself, and then I'll find the means to see Deerslayer, when the future shall be soon settled. Come, girl, the sun has set, and the ark is drifting away from us; let us paddle up to the scow and consult with our friends. This night I shall look into the chest, and to-morrow shall determine what we are to do. As for the Hurons; now we can use our stores without fear of Thomas Hutter, they will be easily bought off. Let me get Deerslayer once out of their hands, and a single hour shall bring things to an understanding."

Judith spoke with decision, and she spoke with authority, a habit she had long practised towards her feeble-minded sister. But, while thus accustomed to have her way, by the aid of manner and a readier command of words, Hetty occasionally checked her impetuous feel-

ings and hasty acts by the aid of those simple, moral truths that were so deeply engrafted in all her own thoughts and feelings; shining through both with a mild and beautiful lustre that threw a sort of holy halo around so much of what she both said and did. On the present occasion, this healthful ascendency of the girl of weak intellect, over her of a capacity that, in other situations, might have become brilliant and admired, was exhibited in the usual simple and earnest manner.

"You forget, Judith, what has brought us here," she said reproachfully. "This is mother's grave, and we have just laid the body of father by her side. We have done wrong to talk so much of ourselves at such a spot, and ought now to pray God to forgive us, and ask *him* to teach us where we are to go, and what we are to do."

Judith involuntarily laid aside her paddle, while Hetty dropped on her knees and was soon lost in her devout but simple petitions. Her sister did not pray. This she had long ceased to do directly, though anguish of spirit frequently wrung from her mental and hasty appeals to the great source of benevolence, for support, if not for a change of spirit. Still, she never beheld Hetty on her knees, that a feeling of tender recollection, as well as of profound regret

at the deadness of her own heart, did not come over her. Thus had she herself done in childhood, and even down to the hour of her ill-fated visits to the garrisons; and she would willingly have given worlds, at such moments, to be able to exchange her present sensations, for that confiding faith, those pure aspirations, and the gentle hope that shone through every lineament and movement of her, otherwise, less-favoured sister. All she could do, however, was to drop her head to her bosom, and assume in her attitude some of that devotion in which her stubborn spirit refused to unite.

When Hetty rose from her knees, her countenance had a glow and serenity that rendered a face that was always agreeable, positively handsome. Her mind was at peace, and her conscience acquitted her of a neglect of duty.

"Now you may go if you want to, Judith," she said; "God has been kind to me, and lifted a burden off my heart. Mother had many such burdens, she used to tell me, and she always took them off in this way. 'Tis the only way, sister, such things can be done. You may raise a stone, or a log, with your hands; but the heart *must* be lightened by prayer. I don't think you pray as often as you used to do when younger, Judith!"

"Never mind—never mind, child"—answered the other huskily—"'tis no matter, now. Mother is gone, and Thomas Hutter is gone, and the time has come when we must think and act for ourselves."

As the canoe moved slowly away from the place, under the gentle impulsion of the elder sister's paddle, the younger sat musing, as was her wont, whenever her mind was perplexed by any idea more abstract and difficult of comprehension than common.

"I don't know what you mean by future, Judith," she at length suddenly observed. "Mother used to call heaven the future, but you seem to think it means next week, or to-morrow!"

"It means both, dear sister; every thing that is yet to come, whether in this world or another. It is a solemn word, Hetty, and most so, I fear, to them that think the least about it. Mother's future is eternity; ours may yet mean what will happen while we live in this world—— is not that a canoe just passing behind the castle?—here, more in the direction of the point I mean; it is hid, now;—but, certainly, I saw a canoe stealing behind the logs."

"I've seen it some time," Hetty quietly answered, for the Indians had few terrors for

her, "but I did not think it right to talk about such things over mother's grave. The canoe came from the camp, Judith, and was paddled by a single man; he seemed to be Deerslayer, and no Iroquois."

"Deerslayer!" returned the other, with much of her native impetuosity. "That can't be! Deerslayer is a prisoner, and I have been thinking of the means of setting him free. Why did you fancy it Deerslayer, child?"

"You can look for yourself, sister; there comes the canoe in sight again, on this side of the hut."

Sure enough, the light boat had passed the building, and was now steadily advancing towards the ark; the persons on board of which were already collecting in the head of the scow, to receive their visitor. A single glance sufficed to assure Judith that her sister was right, and that Deerslayer was alone in the canoe. His approach was so calm and leisurely, however, as to fill her with wonder, since a man who had effected his escape from enemies, by either artifice or violence, would not be apt to move with the steadiness and deliberation with which his paddle swept the water. By this time, the day was fairly departing, and objects were already seen dimly under the shores. In the broad lake, however, the light still lingered, and around

the immediate scene of the present incidents, which was less shaded than most of the sheet, being in its broadest part, it cast a glare that bore some faint resemblance to the warm tints of an Italian or Grecian sunset. The logs of the hut and ark had a sort of purple hue, blended with the growing obscurity, and the bark of the hunter's boat was losing its distinctness in colours richer, but more mellowed, than those it showed under a bright sun. As the two canoes approached each other—for Judith and her sister had plied their paddles so as to intercept the unexpected visitor ere he reached the ark—even Deerslayer's sun-burned countenance wore a brighter aspect than common, under the pleasing tints that seemed to dance in the atmosphere. Judith fancied that delight at meeting her had some share in this unusual and agreeable expression. She was not aware that her own beauty appeared to more advantage than common, from the same natural cause; nor did she understand, what it would have given her so much pleasure to know, that the young man actually thought her, as she drew near, the loveliest creature of her sex his eyes had ever dwelt on.

"Welcome—welcome, Deerslayer!" exclaimed the girl, as the canoes floated at each other's sides, the paddles having ceased their move-

ments; "we have had a melancholy—a frightful day—but your return is, at least, one misfortune the less. Have the Hurons become more humane and let you go; or have you escaped from the wretches by your own courage and skill?"

"Neither Judith—neither one nor t'other. The Mingos are Mingos still, and will live and die Mingos; it is not likely their natur's will ever undergo much improvement. Well; they've *their* gifts, and we've our'n, Judith, and it doesn't much become either to speak ill of what the Lord has created; though, if the truth must be said, I find it a sore trial to think kindly, or to talk kindly of them vagabonds. As for outwitting them, that might have been done, and it *was* done, too, atween the Sarpent, yonder, and me, when we were on the trail of Hist—" here the hunter stopped to laugh in his own silent fashion;—"but it's no easy matter to sarcumvent the sarcumvented. Even the fa'ans get to know the tricks of the hunters afore a single season is over; and an Indian, whose eyes have once been opened by a sarcumvention, never shuts them ag'in in precisely the same spot. I've known whites to do that, but never a red-skin. What they l'arn, comes by practice, and not by books; and of all school-

masters, exper'ence gives lessons that are the longest remembered."

"All this is true, Deerslayer; but if you have not escaped from the savages, how came you here?"

"That's a nat'ral question, and charmingly put. You *are* wonderful handsome this evening, Judith, or, Wild Rose, as the Sarpent calls you, and I may as well say it, since I honestly think it! You may well call them Mingos, savages, too, for savage enough do they feel, and savage enough will they act, if you once give them an opportunity. They feel their loss here, in the late skrimmage, to their hearts' cores, and are ready to revenge it on any creatur' of English blood that may fall in their way. Nor, for that matter, do I much think they would stand at taking their satisfaction out of a Dutchman."

"They have killed father; that ought to satisfy their wicked cravings for blood," observed Hetty, reproachfully.

"I know it gal—I know the whole story—partly from what I've seen from the shore, since they brought me up from the point, and partly from their threats ag'in myself, and their other discourse. Well, life is unsartain at the best, and we all depend on the breath of our nostrils for

it, from day to day. If you've lost a staunch fri'nd, as I make no doubt you have, Providence will raise up new ones in his stead; and since our acquaintance has begun in this oncommon manner, I shall take it as a hint that it will be a part of my duty in futur', should the occasion offer, to see you don't suffer for want of food in the wigwam. I can't bring the dead to life, but as to feeding the living, there's few on all this frontier can outdo me, though I say it in the way of pity and consolation, like, and in no particular in the way of boasting!"

"We understand you, Deerslayer," returned Judith, hastily, "and take all that falls from your lips, as it is meant, in kindness and friendship. Would to heaven all men had tongues as true, and hearts as honest!"

"In that respect men *do* differ, of a sartainty, Judith. I've known them that wasn't to be trusted any farther than you can see them; and others ag'in whose messages, sent with a small piece of wampum, perhaps, might just as much be depended on, as if the whole business was finished afore your face. Yes, Judith, you never said truer words, than when you said some men might be depended on, and some others might not."

"You are an unaccountable being, Deerslayer,"

returned, the girl not a little puzzled with the childish simplicity of character that the hunter so often betrayed—a simplicity so striking, that it frequently appeared to place him nearly on a level with the fatuity of poor Hetty, though always relieved by the beautiful moral truth that shone through all that this unfortunate girl both said and did. "You are a most unaccountable man, and I often do not know how to understand you. But never mind, just now; you have forgotten to tell us by what means you are here."

"I!—oh! That's not very onaccountable, if I am myself, Judith. I'm out on furlough."

"Furlough!—That word has a meaning among the soldiers that I understand; I cannot tell what it signifies when used by a prisoner."

"It means just the same. You're right enough; the soldiers do use it, and just in the same way as I use it. A furlough is when a man has leave to quit a camp, or a garrison, for a sartain specified time; at the end of which he is to come back and shoulder his musket, or submit to his torments, just as he may happen to be a soldier, or a captyve. Being the last, I must take the chances of a prisoner."

"Have the Hurons suffered you to quit them in this manner, without watch or guard?"

"Sartain—I couldn't have come in any other

manner, unless, indeed it had been by a bold rising or a sarcumvention."

"What pledge have they that you will ever return?"

"My word," answered the hunter, simply. "Yes, I own I gave 'em *that*, and big fools would they have been to let me come without it! Why, in that case, I shouldn't have been obliged to go back and ondergo any deviltries their fury may invent, but might have shouldered my rifle, and made the best of my way to the Delaware villages. But, Lord! Judith, they know'd this, just as well as you and I do, and would no more let me come away without a promise to go back, than they would let the wolves dig up the bones of their fathers!"

"Is it possible you mean to do this act of extraordinary self-destruction and recklessness?"

"Anan!"

"I ask if it can be possible that you expect to be able to put yourself again in the power of such ruthless enemies, by keeping your word."

Deerslayer looked at his fair questioner for a moment, with stern displeasure. Then the expression of his honest and guileless face suddenly changed, lighting as by a quick illumination of thought; after which he laughed in his ordinary manner.

"I didn't understand you at first, Judith; no, I didn't! You believe that Chingachgook and Harry Hurry won't suffer it; but you don't know mankind thoroughly yet, I see. The Delaware would be the last man on 'arth to offer any objections to what he knows is a duty; and, as for March, he doesn't care enough about any creatur' but himself to spend many words on such a subject. If he did, 'twould make no great difference, howsever; but not he—for he thinks more of his gains than of even his own word. As for my promises, or your'n, Judith, or anybody else's they give him no consarn. Don't be under any oneasiness, therefore, gal; I shall be allowed to go back according to the furlough; and if difficulties was made, I've not been brought up and edicated, as one may say, in the woods without knowing how to look 'em down."

Judith made no answer for some little time. All her feelings as a woman—and as a woman who, for the first time in her life, was beginning to submit to that sentiment which has so much influence on the happiness or misery of her sex—revolted at the cruel fate that she fancied Deerslayer was drawing down upon himself, while the sense of right, which God has implanted in every human breast, told her to admire an integrity as indomitable and unpretending as that which the

other so unconsciously displayed. Argument, she felt would be useless; nor was she, at that moment, disposed to lessen the dignity and high principle that were so striking in the intentions of the hunter, by any attempt to turn him from his purpose. That something might yet occur to supersede the necessity for this self-immolation, she tried to hope; and then she proceeded to ascertain the facts, in order that her own conduct might be regulated by her knowledge of circumstances.

"When is your furlough out, Deerslayer?" she asked, after both canoes were heading towards the ark, and moving with scarcely a perceptible effort of the paddles through the water.

"To-morrow noon—not a minute afore; and you may depend on it, Judith, I shan't quit what I call Christian company, to go and give myself up to them vagabonds, an instant sooner than is downright necessary. They begin to fear a visit from the garrisons, and wouldn't lengthen the time a moment; and it's pretty well understood atween us, that, should I fail in my ar'n'd, the torments are to take place when the sun begins to fall, that they may strike upon their home trail as soon as it is dark."

This was said solemnly, as if the thought of what was believed to be in reserve duly weighed

on the prisoner's mind, and yet so simply, and without a parade of suffering, as rather to repel than to invite any open manifestations of sympathy.

"Are they bent on revenging their losses?" Judith asked, faintly, her own high spirit yielding to the influence of the other's quiet but dignified integrity of purpose.

"Downright, if I can judge of Indian inclinations by the symptoms. They think, howsever, I don't suspect their designs, I do believe; but one that has lived so long among men of red-skin gifts, is no more likely to be misled in Indian feelin's, than a true hunter is like to lose his trail, or a staunch hound his scent. My own judgment is greatly ag'in my own escape, for I see the women are a good deal enraged on behalf of Hist, though I say it, perhaps, that shouldn't say it—seein' that I had considerable hand myself in getting the gal off. Then there was a cruel murder in their camp last night, and that shot might just as well have been fired into my breast. Howsever, come what will, the Sarpent and his wife will be safe, and that is some happiness in any case."

"Oh! Deerslayer, they will think better of this since they have given you until to-morrow noon to make up your mind!"

"I judge not, Judith; yes, I judge not. An Indian is an Indian, gal, and it's pretty much hopeless to think of swarving him, when he's got the scent and follows it with his nose in the air. The Delawares, now are a half-christianized tribe —not that I think such sort of Christians much better than your whole-blooded disbelievers—but, nevertheless, what good half-christianizing can do to a man, some among 'em have got, and yet revenge clings to their hearts like the wild creepers here to the tree!. Then I slew one of the best and boldest of their warriors, they say, and it *is* too much to expect that they should captivate the man who did this deed, in the very same scouting on which it was performed, and they take no account of the matter. Had a month or so gone by, their feelin's would have been softened down, and we might have met in a more friendly way; but it is, as it is. Judith, this is talking of nothing but myself and my own consarns, when you have had trouble enough and may want to consult a fri'nd a little about your own matters. Is the old man laid in the water where I should think his body would like to rest?"

"It is, Deerslayer," answered Judith, almost inaudibly. "That duty has just been performed. You are right in thinking that I wish to consult a friend; and that friend is yourself. Harry Hurry

is about to leave us; when he is gone, and we have got a little over the feelings of this solemn office, I hope you will give me an hour alone. Hetty and I are at a loss what to do."

"That's quite nat'ral, coming as things have, suddenly and fearfully. But here's the ark, and we'll say more of this when there is a better opportunity."

CHAPTER III.

"The winde is great upon the highest hilles;
The quiet life is in the dale below;
Who tread on ice shall slide against their willes;
They want not cares, that curious hearts should know;
Who lives at ease and can content him so,
Is perfect wise, and sets us all to schoole:
Who hates this lore may well be called a foole."

CHURCHYARD.

THE meeting between Deerslayer and his friends in the ark was grave and anxious. The two Indians, in particular, read in his manner that he was not a successful fugitive, and a few sententious words sufficed to let them comprehend the nature of what their friend had termed his "furlough." Chingachgook immediately became thoughtful; while Hist, as usual, had no better mode of expressing her sympathy than by those little attentions which mark the affectionate manner of woman.

In a few minutes, however, something like a general plan for the proceedings of the night was adopted, and, to the eye of an uninstructed observer, things would be thought to move in their ordinary train. It was now getting to be dark,

and it was decided to sweep the ark up to the castle, and secure it in its ordinary berth. This decision was come to, in some measure, on account of the fact that all the canoes were again in the possession of their proper owners; but principally, from the security that was created by the representations of Deerslayer. He had examined the state of things among the Hurons, and felt satisfied that they meditated no further hostilities during the night, the loss they had met having indisposed them to further exertions for the moment. Then he had a proposition to make—the object of his visit; and, if this were accepted, the war would at once terminate between the parties; and it was improbable that the Hurons would anticipate the failure of a project on which their chiefs had apparently set their hearts, by having recourse to violence previously to the return of their messenger.

As soon as the ark was properly secured, the different members of the party occupied themselves in their several peculiar manners; haste in council, or in decision, no more characterizing the proceedings of the border whites, than it did those of their red neighbours. The women busied themselves in preparations for the evening meal, sad and silent, but ever attentive to the first wants of nature.

Hurry set about repairing his moccasins, by the light of a blazing knot; Chingachgook seated himself in gloomy thought; while Deerslayer proceeded, in a manner equally free from affectation and concern, to examine "Killdeer," the rifle of Hutter, that has been already mentioned, and which subsequently became so celebrated in the hands of the individual who was now examining its merits. The piece was a little longer than usual, and had evidently been turned out from the work-shop of some manufacturer of a superior order. It had a few silver ornaments; though, on the whole, it would have been deemed a plain piece by most frontier men; its great merit consisting in the accuracy of its bore, the perfection of the details, and the excellence of the metal. Again and again did the hunter apply the breech to his shoulder, and glance his eye along the sights, and as often did he poise his body, and raise the weapon slowly, as if about to catch an aim at a deer in order to try the weight, and to ascertain its fitness for quick and accurate firing. All this was done by the aid of Hurry's torch, simply, but with an earnestness and abstraction that would have been found touching by any spectator who happened to know the real situation of the man.

"'Tis a glorious we'pon, Hurry!" Deerslayer at length exclaimed, "and it may be thought a

pity that it has fallen into the hands of women. The hunters have told me of its expl'ites; and by all I have heard, I should set it down as sartain death in exper'enced hands. Hearken to the tick of this lock—a wolf-trap hasn't a livelier spring; pan and cock speak together, like two singing-masters undertaking a psalm in meetin'. I never *did* see so true a bore, Hurry, that's sartain!"

"Ay, Old Tom, used to give the piece a character, though he wasn't the man to particularize the ra'al natur' of any sort of fire-arms in practice," returned March, passing the deer's thongs through the moccasin with the coolness of a cobbler. "He was no marksman, that we must all allow; but he had his good p'ints, as well as his bad ones. I have had hopes that Judith might consait the idee of giving Killdeer to me."

"There's no saying what young women may do, that's a truth, Hurry; and I suppose you're as likely to own the rifle as another. Still, when things are so very near perfection, it's a pity not to reach it entirely."

"What do you mean by that?—Would not that piece look as well on my shoulder, as on any man's?"

"As for looks, I say nothing. You are both good-looking, and might make what is called a good-looking couple. But the true p'int is as to conduct. More deer would fall in one day by

that piece in some men's hands, than would fall in a week in your'n Hurry! I've seen you try; —you remember the buck t'other day?"

"That buck was out of season; and who wishes to kill venison out of season. I was merely trying to frighten the creatur', and I think you will own that he was pretty well skeared at any rate."

"Well, well, have it as you say. But this is a lordly piece, and would make a steady hand and quick eye the King of the Woods!"

"Then keep it, Deerslayer, and become King of the Woods," said Judith, earnestly, who had heard the conversation, and whose eye was never averted from the honest countenance of the hunter. "It can never be in better hands than it is at this moment; there I hope it will remain these fifty years."

"Judith you can't be in 'arnest!" exclaimed Deerslayer, taken so much by surprise, as to betray more emotion than it was usual for him to manifest on ordinary occasions. "Such a gift would be fit for a ra'al king to make; yes, and for a ra'al king to receive."

"I never was more in earnest in my life, Deerslayer; and I am as much in earnest in the wish as in the gift."

"Well, gal, well; we'll find time to talk of this

ag'in. You musn't be down-hearted, Hurry, for Judith is a sprightly young woman, and she has a quick reason; she knows that the credit of her father's rifle is safer in my hands, than it can possibly be in your'n; and, therefore, you musn't be down-hearted. In other matters, more to your liking, too, you'll find she'll give you the preference."

Hurry growled out his dissatisfaction; but he was too intent on quitting the lake, and in making his preparations to waste his breath on a subject of this nature. Shortly after the supper was ready; it was eaten in silence, as is so much the habit of those who consider the table as merely a place of animal refreshment. On this occasion, however, sadness and thought contributed their share to the general desire not to converse; for Deerslayer was so far an exception to the usages of men of his cast, as not only to wish to hold discourse on such occasions, but as often to create a similar desire in his companions.

The meal ended, and the humble preparations removed, the whole party assembled on the platform to hear the expected intelligence from Deerslayer on the subject of his visit. It had been evident he was in no haste to make his communications; but the feelings of Judith would no longer admit of delay. Stools were brought from the ark

and the hut, and the whole six placed themselves in a circle, near the door, watching each other's countenances as best they could, by the scanty means that were furnished by a lovely starlight night. Along the shore, beneath the mountains, lay the usual body of gloom; but in the broad lake no shadow was cast, and a thousand mimic stars were dancing in the limpid element, that was just stirred enough by the evening air to set them all in motion.

"Now, Deerslayer," commenced Judith, whose impatience resisted further restraint; "now, Deerslayer, tell us all the Hurons have to say, and the reason why they have sent you on parole to make us some offer."

"Furlough, Judith; furlough is the word; and it carries the same meaning with a captyve at large as it does with a soldier who has leave to quit his colours. In both cases the word is past to come back: and now I remember to have heard that's the ra'al signification, 'furlough' meaning a 'word' passed for the doing of any thing or the like. Parôle, I rather think, is Dutch, and has something to do with the tattoos of the garrisons. But this makes no great difference; since the vartue of a pledge lies in the idee, and not in the word. Well, then, if the message must be given, it must; and perhaps there is no use in putting it off.

Hurry will soon be wanting to set out on his journey to the river, and the stars rise and set, just as if they cared for neither Indian nor message. Ah's! me; 'tisn't a pleasant, and I know it's a useless ar'n'd;—but it must be told."

"Harkee, Deerslayer," put in Hurry, a little authoritatively; "you're a sensible man in a hunt, and as good a fellow on a march as a sixty-miler-a-day could wish to meet with; but you're oncommon slow about messages, especially them that you think won't be likely to be well received. When a thing is to be told, why, tell it, and don't hang back like a Yankee lawyer pretending he can't understand a Dutchman's English, just to get a double fee out of him."

"I understand you, Hurry, and well are you named to-night, seeing you've no time to lose. But let us come at once to the p'int, seeing that's the object of this council; for council it may be called, though women have seats among us. The simple fact is this. When the party came back from the castle, the Mingos held a council, and bitter thoughts were uppermost, as was plainly to be seen by their gloomy faces. No one likes to be beaten, and a red-skin as little as a pale-face. Well, when they had smoked upon it, and made their speeches, and their council-fire had burnt low, the matter came out. It seems the elders

among 'em consaited I was a man to be trusted on a furlough. They're wonderful obsarvant, them Mingos; *that* their worst inimies must allow; but they consaited I was such a man; and it isn't often—" added the hunter, with a pleasing consciousness that his previous life justified this implicit reliance on his good faith—" it isn't often they consait any thing so good of a paleface; but so they did with me, and therefore they didn't hesitate to speak their minds, which is just this:—You see the state of things. The lake and all on it, they fancy, lie at their marcy. Thomas Hutter is deceased, and as for Hurry, they've got the idee he has been near enough to death to-day, not to wish to take another look at him this summer. Therefore, they account all your forces as reduced to Chingachgook and the two young women, and, while they know the Delaware to be of a high race, and a born warrior, they know he's now on his first war-path. As for the gals, of course they set them down much as they do women in gineral."

" You mean that they despise us!" interrupted Judith, with eyes that flashed so brightly as to be observed by all present.

" That will be seen in the end. They hold that all on the lake lies at their marcy, and, therefore, they send by me this belt of wampum," showing

the article in question to the Delaware as he spoke, "with these words:—Tell the Sarpent, they say, that he has done well for a beginner; he may now strike across the mountains for his own villages, and no one shall look for his trail. If he has found a scalp, let him take it with him; the Huron braves have hearts, and can feel for a young warrior who doesn't wish to go home empty-handed. If he is nimble, he is welcome to lead out a party in pursuit. Hist, howsever, must go back to the Hurons; when she left them in the night, she carried away, by mistake, that which doesn't belong to her."

"That *can't* be true!" said Hetty, earnestly. "Hist is no such girl—but one that gives everybody his due—"

How much more she would have said, in remonstrance, cannot be known, inasmuch as Hist, partly laughing, and partly hiding her face in shame, put her own hand across the speaker's mouth, in a way to check the words.

"You don't understand Mingo messages, poor Hetty," resumed Deerslayer, "which seldom mean what lies exactly uppermost. Hist has brought away with her the inclinations of a young Huron, and they want her back again, that the poor young man may find them where he last saw them! The Sarpent, they say, is too promising a

young warrior not to find as many wives as he wants, but this one he cannot have. That's their meaning, and nothing else, as I understand it."

"They are very obliging and thoughtful in supposing a young woman can forget all her own inclinations in order to let this unhappy youth find his!" said Judith, ironically; though her manner became more bitter as she proceeded. "I suppose a woman is a woman, let her colour be white or red; and your chiefs know little of a woman's heart, Deerslayer, if they think it can ever forgive when wronged, or ever forget when it fairly loves."

"I suppose that's pretty much the truth with some women, Judith, though I've known them that could do both. The next message is to you. They say the Muskrat, as they call your father, has dove to the bottom of the lake; that he will never come up again, and that his young will soon be in want of wigwams, if not of food. The Huron huts, they think, are better than the huts of York; they wish you to come and try them. Your colour is white, they own, but they think young women who've lived so long in the woods would lose their way in the clearin's. A great warrior among them has lately lost his wife, and he would be glad to put the Wild Rose on her bench at his fire-side. As for the Feeble-Mind, she will al-

ways be honoured and taken care of by red warriors. Your father's goods, they think, ought to go to enrich the tribe; but your own property, which is to include every thing of a female natur', will go, like that of all wives, into the wigwam of the husband. Moreover, they've lost a young maiden by violence, lately, and 'twill take two pale-faces to fill her seat."

"And do *you* bring such a message to *me!*" exclaimed Judith, though the tone in which the words were uttered had more in it of sorrow than of anger. "Am I a girl to be an Indian's slave?"

"If you wish my honest thoughts on this p'int, Judith, I shall answer that I don't think you'll willingly ever become any man's slave, red-skin or white. You're not to think hard, howsever, of my bringing the message, as near as I could, in the very words in which it was given to me. Them was the conditions on which I got my furlough, and a bargain is a bargain, though it is made with a vagabond. I've told you what *they've* said, but I've not yet told you what I think you ought, one and all, to answer."

"Ay; let's hear that, Deerslayer," put in Hurry. "My cur'osity is up on that consideration, and I should like right well to hear your

idees of the reasonableness of the reply. For my part, though, my own mind is pretty much settled on the p'int of my own answer, which shall be made known as soon as necessary."

"And so is mine, Hurry, on all the different heads, and on no one is it more sartainly settled than on your'n. If I was you I should say—'Deerslayer, tell them scamps they don't know Harry March! He is human; and having a white skin, he has also a white natur', which natur' won't let him desart females of his own race and gifts in their greatest need. So set me down as one that will refuse to come into your treaty, though you should smoke a hogshead of tobacco over it.'"

March was a little embarrassed at this rebuke, which was uttered with sufficient warmth of manner, and with a point that left no doubt of the meaning. Had Judith encouraged him, he would not have hesitated about remaining to defend her and her sister, but under the circumstances, a feeling of resentment rather urged him to abandon them. At all events, there was not a sufficiency of chivalry in Hurry Harry, to induce him to hazard the safety of his own person, unless he could see a direct connection between the probable consequences and his own interests. It is no wonder, therefore, that his answer partook

equally of his intention, and of the reliance he so boastingly placed on his gigantic strength, which if it did not always make him courageous, usually made him impudent as respects those with whom he conversed.

"Fair words make long friendships, Master Deerslayer," he said, a little menacingly. "You're but a stripling, and, you know by exper'ence, what you are in the hands of a man. As you're not me, but only a go-between, sent by the savages to us Christians, you may tell your empl'yers that they do know Harry March, which is a proof of their sense as well as his. He's human enough to follow human natur', and that tells him to see the folly of one man's fighting a whole tribe. If females desart him they must expect to be desarted *by* him whether they're of his own gifts, or another man's gifts. Should Judith see fit to change her mind, she's welcome to my company to the river, and Hetty with her; but shouldn't she come to this conclusion, I start as soon as I think the enemy's scouts are beginning to nestle themselves in among the brush and leaves for the night."

"Judith will *not* change her mind, and she does not ask your company, Master March," returned the girl with spirit.

"That p'int's settled, then," resumed Deer-

slayer, unmoved by the other's warmth. "Hurry Harry must act for himself, and do that which will be most likely to suit his own fancy. The course he means to take will give him an easy race, if it don't give him an easy conscience. Next comes the question with Hist—what say you, gal?—will you desart your duty, too, and go back to the Mingos and take a Huron husband; and all, not for the love of the man you're to marry, but for the love of your own scalp?"

"Why you talk so to Hist?" demanded the girl, half offended. "You t'ink a red-skin girl made like captain's lady, to laugh and joke with any officer that come."

"What I think, Hist, is neither here nor there, in this matter. I must carry back your answer, and in order to do so, it is necessary that you should send it. A faithful messenger gives his ar'n'd, word for word."

Hist no longer hesitated to speak her mind fully. In the excitement, she rose from her bench and naturally recurring to that language in which she expressed herself the most readily, she delivered her thoughts and intentions, beautifully and with dignity, in the tongue of her own people.

"Tell the Hurons, Deerslayer," she said, "that they are as ignorant as moles; they don't know

the wolf from the dog. Among my people, the rose dies on the stem where it budded; the tears of the child fall on the graves of its parents; the corn grows where the seed has been planted. The Delaware girls are not messengers to be sent, like belts of wampum, from tribe to tribe. They are honeysuckles, that are sweetest in their own woods; their own young men carry them away in their bosoms because they are fragrant; they are sweetest when plucked from their native stems. Even the robin and the marten come back, year after year, to their old nests; shall a woman be less true-hearted than a bird? Set the pine in the clay, and it will turn yellow; the willow will not flourish on the hill; the tamarack is healthiest in the swamp; the tribes of the sea love best to hear the winds that blow over the salt water. As for a Huron youth, what is he to a maiden of the Lenni Lenape? He may be fleet, but her eyes do not follow him in the race; they look back towards the lodges of the Delawares. He may sing a sweet song for the girls of Canada, but there is no music for Wah, but in the tongue she has listened to from childhood. Were the Huron born of the people that once roamed the shores of the salt lake, it would be in vain, unless he were of the family of Uncas. The young pine will rise to be as high as any of its fathers. Wah-

ta!-Wah has not but one heart, and it can love but one husband."

Deerslayer listened to this characteristic message, which was given with an earnestness suited to the feelings from which it sprung with undisguised delight; meeting the ardent eloquence of the girl, as she concluded, with one of his own heart-felt, silent, and peculiar fits of laughter.

"That's worth all the wampum in the woods!" he exclaimed. "You don't understand it, I suppose, Judith; but if you'll look into your feelin's, and fancy that an inimy had sent to tell you to give up the man of your choice, and to take up with another that wasn't the man of your choice, you'll get the substance of it, I'll warrant! Give me a woman for ra'al eloquence, if they'll only make up their minds to speak what they feel. By speakin', I don't mean chatterin', howsever, for most of them will do *that* by the hour; but comin' out with their honest, deepest feelin's, in proper words. And now, Judith, having got the answer of a redskin girl, it is fit I should get that of a pale-face, if, indeed, a countenance that is as blooming as your'n can in any wise so be tarmed. You are well named the Wild Rose, and so far as colour goes, Hetty ought to be called the Honeysuckle."

"Did this language come from one of the garrison gallants, I should deride it, Deerslayer; but

coming from *you*, I know it can be depended on," returned Judith, deeply gratified by his unmeditated and characteristic compliments. "It is too soon, however, to ask my answer; the Great Serpent has not yet spoken."

"The Serpent! Lord; I could carry back his speech without hearing a word of it! I didn't think of putting the question to him at all, I will allow; though 't would be hardly right either seeing that truth is truth, and I'm bound to tell these Mingos the fact, and nothing else. So, Chingachgook, let us hear *your* mind on this matter—are you inclined to strike across the hills towards your village, to give up Hist to a Huron, and to tell the chiefs at home, that if they're actyve and successful, they may possibly get *on* the end of the Iroquois trail some two or three days after the inimy has got *off* of it?"

Like his betrothed, the young chief arose, that his answer might be given with due distinctness and dignity. Hist had spoken with her hands crossed upon her bosom, as if to suppress the emotions within; but the warrior stretched an arm before him, with a calm energy that aided in giving emphasis to his expressions.

"Wampum should be sent for wampum," he said; "a message must be answered by a message. Hear what the Great Serpent of the Delawares has to say to the pretended wolves from the great

lakes, that are howling through our woods. They are no wolves; they are dogs that have come to get their tails and ears cropped by the hands of the Delawares. They are good at stealing young women; bad at keeping them. Chingachgook takes his own where he finds it—he asks leave of no cur from the Canadas. If he has a tender feeling in his heart, it is no business of the Hurons. He tells it to her who most likes to know it; he will not bellow it in the forest, for the ears of those that only understand yells of terror. What passes in his lodge is not for the chiefs of his own people to know; still less for Mingo rogues—"

"Call 'em vagabonds, Sarpent," interrupted Deerslayer, unable to restrain his delight—"yes, just call 'em up-and-down vagabonds, which is a word easily intarpreted, and the most hateful to all their ears, it's so true. Never fear me; I'll give 'em your message, syllable for syllable, sneer for sneer, idee for idee, scorn for scorn—and they desarve no better at your hands.—Only call 'em vagabonds, once or twice, and that will set the sap mounting in 'em, from their lowest roots to the uppermost branches!"

"Still less for Mingo vagabonds!" resumed Chingachgook, quite willingly complying with his friend's request.—"Tell the Huron dogs to howl louder, if they wish a Delaware to find them in

the woods, where they burrow like foxes, instead of hunting like warriors. When they had a Delaware maiden in their camp, there was a reason for hunting them up; now they will be forgotten, unless they make a noise. Chingachgook don't like the trouble of going to his villages for more warriors; he can strike their run-away trail: unless they hide it under ground, he will follow it to Canada, alone. He will keep Wah-ta!-Wah with him to cook his game; they two will be Delawares enough to scare all the Hurons back to their own country."

"That's a grand despatch, as the officers call them things!" cried Deerslayer; "'t will set all the Huron blood in motion; most particularly that part where he tells 'em Hist, too, will keep on their heels, till they're fairly driven out of the country. Ah's! me; big words ar'n't always big deeds, notwithstanding! The Lord send that we be able to be only one half as good as we promise to be! And now, Judith, it's your turn to speak, for them miscreants will expect an answer from each person, poor Hetty, perhaps, excepted."

"And why not Hetty, Deerslayer? She often speaks to the purpose; the Indians may respect her words, for they feel for people in her condition."

"That is true, Judith, and quick-thoughted in you. The red-skins *do* respect misfortunes of all

kinds, and Hetty's in particular. So, Hetty, if you have any thing to say, I'll carry it to the Hurons as faithfully as if it was spoken by a schoolmaster, or a missionary."

The girl hesitated a moment, and then she answered in her own gentle, soft tones, as earnestly as any who had preceded her.

"The Hurons can't understand the difference between white people and themselves," she said, "or they wouldn't ask Judith and me to go and live in their villages. God has given one country to the red men, and another to us. He meant us to live apart. Then mother always said that we should never dwell with any but Christians, if possible, and *that* is a reason why we can't go. This lake is ours, and we won't leave it. Father and mother's graves are in it, and even the worst Indians love to stay near the graves of their fathers. I will come and see them again, if they wish me to, and read more out of the Bible to them, but I can't quit father's and mother's graves."

"That will do—that will do, Hetty, just as well as if you sent them a message twice as long," interrupted the hunter. "I'll tell 'em all you've said, and all you mean, and I'll answer for it that they'll be easily satisfied. Now, Judith, your turn comes next, and then this part of my ar'n'd will be tarminated for the night."

Judith manifested a reluctance to give her reply, that had awakened a little curiosity in the messenger. Judging from her known spirit he had never supposed the girl would be less true to her feelings and principles than Hist, or Hetty; and yet there was a visible wavering of purpose that rendered him slightly uneasy. Even now when directly required to speak, she seemed to hesitate; nor did she open her lips until the profound silence told her how anxiously her words were expected. Then, indeed, she spoke, but it was doubtingly and with reluctance.

"Tell me, first—tell *us*, first, Deerslayer," she commenced, repeating the words merely to change the emphasis—"what effect will our answers have on your fate? If you are to be the sacrifice of our spirit, it would have been better had we all been more wary as to the language we use. What, then, are likely to be the consequences to yourself?"

"Lord, Judith, you might as well ask me which way the wind will blow next week, or what will be the age of the next deer that will be shot! I can only say that their faces look a little dark upon me, but it doesn't thunder every time a black cloud rises, nor does every puff of wind blow up rain. That's a question, therefore, much more easily put than answered."

"So is this message of the Iroquois to me,"

answered Judith, rising as if she had determined on her own course for the present. "My answer shall be given, Deerslayer, after you and I have talked together alone, when the others have laid themselves down for the night."

There was a decision in the manner of the girl that disposed Deerslayer to comply, and this he did the more readily as the delay could produce no material consequences one way or the other. The meeting now broke up, Hurry announcing his resolution to leave them speedily. During the hour that was suffered to intervene, in order that the darkness might deepen, before the frontier-man took his departure, the different individuals occupied themselves in their customary modes, the hunter, in particular, passing most of the time in making further inquiries into the perfection of the rifle already mentioned.

The hour of nine soon arrived, however, and then it had been determined that Hurry should commence his journey. Instead of making his adieus frankly, and in a generous spirit, the little he thought it necessary to say was uttered sullenly and in coldness. Resentment at what he considered Judith's obstinacy, was blended with mortification at the career he had run since reaching the lake; and, as is usual with the vulgar and narrow-minded, he was more disposed to reproach

others with his failures, than to censure himself. Judith gave him her hand, but it was quite as much in gladness as with regret, while the two Delawares were not sorry to find he was leaving them. Of the whole party, Hetty alone betrayed any real feeling. Bashfulness and the timidity of her sex and character, kept even her aloof, so that Hurry entered the canoe, where Deerslayer was already waiting for him, before she ventured near enough to be observed. Then, indeed, the girl came into the ark, and approached its end just as the little bark was turning from it, with a movement so light and steady as to be almost imperceptible. An impulse of feeling now overcame her timidity, and Hetty spoke.

"Good bye, Hurry"—she called out in her sweet voice—"good bye, dear Hurry. Take care of yourself in the woods, and don't stop once 'till you reach the garrison. The leaves on the trees are scarcely plentier than the Hurons round the lake, and they'd not treat a strong man like you, as kindly as they treat me."

The ascendency which March had obtained over this feeble-minded, but right-thinking and right-feeling girl, arose from a law of nature. Her senses had been captivated by his personal advantages; and her moral communications with him had never been sufficiently intimate to counteract an effect that

must have been otherwise lessened, even with one whose mind was as obtuse as her own. Hetty's instinct of right, if such a term can be applied to one who seemed taught by some kind spirit how to steer her course with unerring accuracy between good and evil, would have revolted at Hurry's character, on a thousand points, had there been opportunities to enlighten her; but while he conversed and trifled with her sister at a distance from herself, his perfection of form and feature had been left to produce their influence on her simple imagination and naturally tender feelings, without suffering by the alloy of his opinions and coarseness. It is true, she found him rough and rude; but her father was that, and most of the other men she had seen; and that which she believed to belong to all of the sex, struck her less unfavourably in Hurry's character, than it might otherwise have done. Still, it was not absolutely love that Hetty felt for Hurry, nor do we wish so to portray it, but merely that awakening sensibility and admiration, which, under more propitious circumstances, and always supposing no untoward revelations of character, on the part of the young man, had supervened to prevent it, might soon have ripened into that engrossing feeling. She felt for him an incipient tenderness, but scarcely any passion. Perhaps the nearest approach to the latter that Hetty had manifested

was to be seen in the sensitiveness which had caused her to detect March's predilection for her sister; for, among Judith's many admirers, this was the only instance in which the dull mind of the girl had been quickened into an observation of the circumstance.

Hurry received so little sympathy at his departure, that the gentle tones of Hetty, as she thus called after him, sounded soothingly. He checked the canoe, and with one sweep of his powerful arm brought it back to the side of the ark. This was more than Hetty, whose courage had risen with the departure of her hero, had expected, and she now shrunk timidly back at his unexpected return.

"You're a good gal, Hetty, and I can't quit you without shaking hands," said March kindly. "Judith, after all, isn't worth as much as you, though she may be a trifle better-looking. As to wits, if honesty and fair-dealing with a young man is a sign of sense in a young woman, you're worth a dozen Judiths; ay, and for that matter, most young women of my acquaintance."

"Don't say any thing against Judith, Harry," returned Hetty imploringly. "Father's gone, and mother's gone, and nobody's left but Judith and me, and it isn't right for sisters to speak evil, or to hear evil, of each other. Father's in the lake, and so is mother, and we should all fear

God, for we don't know when we may be in the lake, too."

"That sounds reasonable, child, as does most you say. Well, if we ever meet ag'in, Hetty, you'd find a fri'nd in me, let your sister do what she may. I was no great fri'nd of your mother, I'll allow, for we didn't think alike on most p'ints; but then your father, Old Tom and I, fitted each other as remarkably as a buckskin garment will fit any reasonable-built man. I've always been unanimous of opinion that old Floating Tom Hutter, at the bottom, was a good fellow, and will maintain that ag'in all inimies for his sake, as well as for your'n."

"Good bye, Hurry," said Hetty, who now wanted to hasten the young man off, as ardently as she had wished to keep him only the moment before, though she could give no clearer account of the latter than of the former feeling; "good bye, Hurry, take care of yourself in the woods; don't halt till you reach the garrison. I'll read a chapter in the Bible for you before I go to bed, and think of you in my prayers."

This was touching a point on which March had no sympathies, and without more words he shook the girl cordially by the hand, and re-entered the canoe. In another minute the two adventurers were a hundred feet from the ark, and half a dozen

had not elapsed before they were completely lost to view. Hetty sighed deeply, and rejoined her sister and Hist.

For some time, Deerslayer and his companion paddled ahead in silence. It had been determined to land Hurry at the precise point where he is represented, in the commencement of our tale, as having embarked; not only as a place little likely to be watched by the Hurons, but because he was sufficiently familiar with the signs of the woods, at that spot, to thread his way through them in the dark. Thither, then, the light craft proceeded, being urged as diligently, and as swiftly, as two vigorous and skilful canoe-men could force their little vessel through, or rather *over*, the water. Less than a quarter of an hour sufficed for the object; and, at the end of that time, being within the shadows of the shore, and quite near the point they sought, each ceased his efforts in order to make their parting communications out of ear-shot of any straggler who might happen to be in the neighbourhood.

"You will do well to persuade the officers at the garrison to lead out a party ag'in these vagabonds as soon as you git in, Hurry," Deerslayer commenced; "and you'll do better if you volunteer to guide it up yourself. You

know the paths, and the shape of the lake, and the natur' of the land, and can do it better than a common, gineralizing scout. Strike at the Huron camp first, and follow the signs that will then show themselves." A few looks at the hut and the ark will satisfy you as to the state of the Delaware and the women; and, at any rate, there'll be a fine opportunity to fall on the Mingo trail, and to make a mark on the memories of the blackguards that they'll be apt to carry with 'em a long time. It won't be likely to make much difference with me, since *that* matter will be detarmined afore to-morrow's sun has set; but it may make a great change in Judith and Hetty's hopes and prospects!"

"And as for yourself, Nathaniel," Hurry inquired with more interest than he was accustomed to betray in the welfare of others— "and as for yourself, what do you think is likely to turn up?"

"The Lord, in his wisdom, only can tell, Henry March! The clouds look black and threatening, and I keep my mind in a state to meet the worst. Vengeful feelin's are uppermost in the hearts of the Mingos, and any little disapp'intment about the plunder, or the prisoners, or Hist, may make the torments

sartain. The Lord, in his wisdom, can only determine my fate, or your'n!"

"This is a black business, and ought to be put a stop to in some way or other," answered Hurry, confounding the distinctions between right and wrong, as is usual with selfish and vulgar men. "I heartily wish old Hutter and I had scalped every creatur' in their camp, the night we first landed with that capital object! Had you not held back, Deerslayer, it might have been done; then you wouldn't have found yourself, at the last moment, in the desperate condition you mention."

"'Twould have been better had you said, you wished you had never attempted to do what it little becomes any white man's gifts to undertake; in which case, not only might we have kept from coming to blows, but Thomas Hutter would now have been living, and the hearts of the savages would be less given to vengeance. The death of that young woman, too, was oncalled for, Henry March, and leaves a heavy load on our names, if not on our consciences!"

This was so apparent, and it seemed so obvious to Hurry himself, at the moment, that he dashed his paddle into the water, and began to urge the canoe towards the shore, as if bent only on running away from his own lively

remorse. His companion humoured this feverish desire for change, and, in a minute or two, the bows of the boat grated lightly on the shingle of the beach. To land, shoulder his pack and rifle, and to get ready for his march, occupied Hurry but an instant, and with a growling adieu, he had already commenced his march, when a sudden twinge of feeling brought him to a dead stop, and immediately after to the other's side.

"You cannot mean to give yourself up ag'in to them murdering savages, Deerslayer!" he said, quite as much in angry remonstrance as with generous feeling. "'Twould be the act of a madman or a fool!"

"There's them that thinks it madness to keep their words, and there's them that don't, Hurry Harry. You may be one of the first, but I'm one of the last. No red-skin breathing shall have it in his power to say, that a Mingo minds his word more than a man of white blood and white gifts, in any thing that consarns me. I'm out on a furlough, and if I've strength and reason, I'll go in on a furlough afore noon to-morrow!"

"What's an Indian, or a word passed, or a furlough taken from creatur's like them, that have neither souls, nor names?"

"If they've got neither souls nor names,

you and I have both, Harry March, and one is accountable for the other. This furlough is not, as you seem to think, a matter altogether atween me and the Mingos, seeing it is a solemn bargain made atween me and God. He who thinks that he can say what he pleases in his distress, and that 'twill all pass for nothing, because 'tis uttered in the forest, and into red men's ears, knows little of his situation, and hopes, and wants. The words are said to the ears of the Almighty. The air is his breath, and the light of the sun is little more than a glance of his eye. Farewell, Harry; we may not meet ag'in; but I would wish you never to treat a furlough, or any other solemn thing, that your Christian God has been called on to witness, as a duty so light that it may be forgotten according to the wants of the body, or even according to the cravings of the spirit."

March was now glad again to escape. It was quite impossible that he could enter into the sentiments that ennobled his companion, and he broke away from both with an impatience that caused him secretly to curse the folly that could induce a man to rush, as it were, on his own destruction. Deerslayer, on the contrary, manifested no such excitement. Sustained by his principles, inflexible in the purpose of acting up to them, and superior to any unmanly ap-

prehension, he regarded all before him as a matter of course, and no more thought of making any unworthy attempt to avoid it, than a Mussulman thinks of counteracting the decrees of Providence. He stood calmly on the shore, listening to the reckless tread with which Hurry betrayed his progress through the bushes, shook his head in dissatisfaction at the want of caution, and then stepped quietly into his canoe. Before he dropped the paddle again into the water, the young man gazed about him at the scene presented by the star-lit night. This was the spot where he had first laid his eyes on the beautiful sheet of water on which he floated. If it was then glorious in the bright light of summer's noon-tide, it was now sad and melancholy under the shadows of night. The mountains rose around it, like black barriers to exclude the outer world, and the gleams of pale light that rested on the broader parts of the basin, were no bad symbols of the faintness of the hopes that were so dimly visible in his own future. Sighing heavily, he pushed the canoe from the land, and took his way back, with steady diligence, towards the ark and the castle.

CHAPTER IV.

"Thy secret pleasures turned to open shame;
Thy private feasting to a public fast;
Thy smoothing titles to a ragged name;
Thy sugar'd tongue to bitter wormwood taste;
Thy violent vanities can never last."

RAPE OF LUCRECE.

JUDITH was waiting the return of Deerslayer on the platform, with stifled impatience, when the latter reached the hut. Hist and Hetty were both in a deep sleep on the bed usually occupied by the two daughters of the house, and the Delaware was stretched on the floor of the adjoining room, his rifle at his side, and a blanket over him, already dreaming of the events of the last few days. There was a lamp burning in the ark; for the family was accustomed to indulge in this luxury on extraordinary occasions, and possessed the means, the vessel being of a form and material to render it probable it had once been an occupant of the chest.

As soon as the girl got a glimpse of the

canoe, she ceased her hurried walk up and down the platform, and stood ready to receive the young man, whose return she had now been anxiously expecting for some time. She helped him to fasten the canoe, and by aiding in the other little similar employments, manifested her desire to reach a moment of liberty as soon as possible. When this was done, in answer to an inquiry of his, she informed him of the manner in which their companions had disposed of themselves. He listened attentively, for the manner of the girl was so earnest and impressive as to apprise him that she had something on her mind of more than common concern.

"And now, Deerslayer," Judith continued, "you see I have lighted the lamp, and put it in the cabin of the ark. That is never done with us unless on great occasions, and I consider this night as the most important of my life. Will you follow me and see what I have to show you—hear what I have to say?"

The hunter was a little surprised; but making no objections, both were soon in the scow, and in the room that contained the light. Here two stools were placed at the side of the chest, with the lamp on another, and a table near by to receive the different articles as they might be brought to view. This arrangement had its rise

in the feverish impatience of the girl, which could brook no delay that it was in her power to obviate. Even all the padlocks were removed, and it only remained to raise the heavy lid, and to expose the treasures of this long-secreted hoard.

"I see, in part, what all this means;" observed Deerslayer, "yes, I see through it, in part. But why is not Hetty present; now Thomas Hutter is gone, she is one of the owners of these cur'osities, and ought to see them opened and handled."

"Hetty sleeps," answered Judith, hastily. "Happily for her, fine clothes and riches have no charms. Besides, she has this night given her share of all that the chest may hold to me, that I may do with it as I please."

"Is poor Hetty composs enough for that, Judith?" demanded the just-minded young man. "It 's a good rule, and a righteous one, never to take when those that give don't know the valie of their gifts; and such as God has visited heavily in their wits ought to be dealt with as carefully as children that haven't yet come to their understandings."

Judith was hurt at this rebuke coming from the person it did; but she would have felt it far more keenly, had not her conscience fully acquitted her of any unjust intentions towards her feeble-minded, but confiding sister. It was not

a moment, however, to betray any of her usual mountings of the spirit, and she smothered the passing sensation in the desire to come to the great object she had in view.

"Hetty will not be wronged," she mildly answered; "she even knows not only what I am about to do, Deerslayer, but *why* I do it. So take your seat, raise the lid of the chest, and this time we will go to the bottom. I shall be disappointed if something is not found to tell us more of the history of Thomas Hutter and my mother."

"Why Thomas Hutter, Judith, and not your father? The dead ought to meet with as much reverence as the living!"

"I have long suspected that Thomas Hutter was not *my* father, though I did think he might have been Hetty's; but now we know he was the father of neither. He acknowledged that much in his dying moments. I am old enough to remember better things than we have seen on this lake, though they are so faintly impressed on my memory, that the earlier part of my life seems like a dream."

"Dreams are but miserable guides when one has to determine about realities, Judith;" returned the other, admonishingly. "Fancy nothing, and hope nothing on their account; though I 've known chiefs that thought 'em useful."

"I expect nothing for the future from them, my good friend, but cannot help remembering what has been. This is idle, however, when half an hour of examination may tell us all, or even more than I want to know."

Deerslayer, who comprehended the girl's impatience, now took his seat, and proceeded once more to raise the different articles that the chest contained from their places. As a matter of course, all that had been previously examined, were found where they had been last deposited; and they excited much less interest, or comment, than when formerly exposed to view. Even Judith laid aside the rich brocade with an air of indifference, for she had a far higher aim before her than the indulgence of vanity, and was impatient to come at the still hidden, or rather unknown, treasures.

"All these we have seen before," she said, "and will not stop to open. The bundle under your hand, Deerslayer, is a fresh one; that we will look into. God send it may contain something to tell poor Hetty and myself, who we really are!"

"Ay, if some bundles could speak, they might tell wonderful secrets," returned the young man, deliberately undoing the folds of another piece of coarse canvass, in order to come at the contents of the roll that lay on his knees; "though this

doesn't seem to be one of that family, seeing 't is neither more nor less than a sort of flag; though of what nation, it passes my l'arnin' to say."

"That flag must have some meaning to it," Judith hurriedly interposed. "Open it wider, Deerslayer, that we may see the colours."

"Well, I pity the ensign that has to shoulder this cloth, and to parade it about in the field. Why 't is large enough, Judith, to make a dozen of them colours the King's officers set so much store by. These can be no ensign's colours, but a gineral's!"

"A ship might carry it, Deerslayer; and ships I know do use such things. Have you never heard any fearful stories about Thomas Hutter's having once been concerned with the people they call buccaneers?"

"Buck-and-near! Not I—not I—I never heard him mentioned as good at a buck far off, or near by. Hurry Harry did tell me something about its being supposed that he had formerly, in some way or other, dealings with sartain sea-robbers; but, Lord, Judith, it can't surely give you any satisfaction to make out that ag'in your mother's own husband, though he isn't your father."

"Any thing will give me satisfaction that tells

me who I am, and helps to explain the dreams of childhood. My mother's husband! Yes, he must have been that, though why a woman like *her* should have chosen a man like *him*, is more than mortal reason can explain. You never saw mother, Deerslayer, and can't feel the vast, vast difference there was between them!"

"Such things *do* happen, howsever;—yes, they *do* happen; though why Providence lets them come to pass, is more than I understand. I 've knew the f'ercest warriors with the gentlest wives of any in the tribe, and awful scolds fall to the lot of Indians fit to be missionaries."

"That was not it, Deerslayer; that was not it. Oh! if it should prove that—no; I cannot wish she should not have been his wife at all. *That* no daughter can wish for her own mother! Go on, now, and let us see what the square-looking bundle holds."

Deerslayer complied, and he found that it contained a small trunk of pretty workmanship, but fastened. The next point was to find a key; but search proving ineffectual, it was determined to force the lock. This Deerslayer soon effected by the aid of an iron instrument, and it was found that the interior was nearly filled with papers. Many were letters; some fragments of manuscripts, memorandums, accounts, and other similar documents. The hawk does not pounce upon the

chicken with a more sudden swoop, than Judith sprang forward to seize this mine of hitherto concealed knowledge. Her education, as the reader will have perceived, was far superior to her situation in life, and her eye glanced over page after page of the letters, with a readiness that her schooling supplied, and with an avidity that found its origin in her feelings. At first it was evident that the girl was gratified, and, we may add, with reason; for the letters written by females in innocence and affection, were of a character to cause her to feel proud of those with whom she had every reason to think she was closely connected by the ties of blood. It does not come within the scope of our plan to give more of these epistles, however, than a general idea of their contents, and this will best be done by describing the effect they produced on the manner, appearance, and feeling of her who was so eagerly perusing them.

It has been said, already, that Judith was much gratified with the letters that first met her eye. They contained the correspondence of an affectionate and intelligent mother to an absent daughter, with such allusions to the answers as served, in a great measure, to fill up the vacuum left by the replies. They were not without admonitions and warnings, however, and Judith felt the blood mounting to her temples, and a cold shudder

succeeding, as she read one in which the propriety of the daughter's indulging in as much intimacy, as had evidently been described in one of the daughter's own letters, with an officer "who came from Europe, and who could hardly be supposed to wish to form an honourable connection in America," was rather coldly commented on by the mother. What rendered it singular, was the fact that the signatures had been carefully cut from every one of these letters, and wherever a name occurred in the body of the epistles, it had been erased with so much diligence as to render it impossible to read it. They had all been enclosed in envelopes, according to the fashion of the age, and not an address either was to be found. Still, the letters themselves had been religiously preserved, and Judith thought she could discover traces of tears remaining on several. She now remembered to have seen the little trunk in her mother's keeping previously to her death, and she supposed it had first been deposited in the chest, along with the other forgotten, or concealed objects, when the letters could no longer contribute to that parent's grief or happiness.

Next came another bundle, and these were filled with the protestations of love, written with passion certainly, but also with that deceit which men so often think it justifiable to use to the other sex. Judith had shed tears abundantly over the first

packet, but now she felt a sentiment of indignation and pride better sustaining her. Her hand shook, however, and cold shivers again passed through her frame, as she discovered a few points of strong resemblance between these letters and some it had been her own fate to receive. Once, indeed, she laid the packet down, bowed her head to her knees, and seemed nearly convulsed. All this time Deerslayer sat a silent, but attentive observer of every thing that passed. As Judith read a letter she put it into his hands to hold, until she could peruse the next; but this seemed in no degree to enlighten her companion, as he was totally unable to read. Nevertheless, he was not entirely at fault in discovering the passions that were contending in the bosom of the fair creature by his side, and, as occasional sentences escaped her in murmurs, he was nearer the truth in his divinations, or conjectures, than the girl would have been pleased at discovering.

Judith had commenced with the earliest letters, luckily for a ready comprehension of the tale they told; for they were carefully arranged in chronological order, and to any one who would take the trouble to peruse them, would have revealed a sad history of gratified passion, coldness, and finally of aversion. As she obtained the clue to their import, her impatience could not admit of delay,

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and she soon got to glancing her eyes over a page, by way of coming at the truth in the briefest manner possible. By adopting this expedient, one to which all who are eager to arrive at results, without encumbering themselves with details, are so apt to resort, Judith made a rapid progress in this melancholy revelation of her mother's failings and punishment. She saw that the period of her own birth was distinctly referred to, and even learned that the homely name she bore was given her by the father of whose person she retained so faint an impression as to resemble a dream. This name was not obliterated from the text of the letters, but stood as if nothing was to be gained by erasing it. Hetty's birth was mentioned once, and in that instance the name was the mother's; but ere this period was reached came the signs of coldness, shadowing forth the desertion that was so soon to follow. It was in this stage of the correspondence that her mother had recourse to the plan of copying her own epistles. They were but few, but were eloquent with the feelings of blighted affection and contrition. Judith sobbed over them, until again and again she felt compelled to lay them aside from sheer physical inability to see, her eyes being literally obscured with tears. Still she returned to the task with increasing interest, and finally

succeeded in reaching the end of the latest communication that had probably ever passed between her parents.

All this occupied fully an hour; for near a hundred letters were glanced at, and some twenty had been closely read. The truth now shone clear upon the acute mind of Judith, so far as her own birth and that of Hetty were concerned. She sickened at the conviction, and for the moment the rest of the world seemed to be cut off from her, and she had now additional reasons for wishing to pass the remainder of her life on the lake, where she had already seen so many bright and so many sorrowing days.

There yet remained more letters to examine. Judith found these were a correspondence between her mother and Thomas Hovey. The originals of both parties were carefully arranged, letter and answer, side by side; and they told the early history of the connection between the ill-assorted pair far more plainly than Judith wished to learn it. Her mother made the advances towards a marriage to the surprise, not to say horror, of her daughter; and she actually found a relief when she discovered traces of what struck her as insanity, or a morbid disposition, bordering on that dire calamity, in the earlier letters of that ill-fated woman. The answers of Hovey were coarse and illiterate, though they manifested a sufficient

desire to obtain the hand of a woman of singular personal attractions, and whose great error he was willing to overlook for the advantage of possessing one every way so much his superior, and who, it also appeared, was not altogether destitute of money. The remainder of this part of the correspondence was brief; and it was soon confined to a few communications on business, in which the miserable wife hastened the absent husband in his preparations to abandon a world which there was sufficient reason to think was as dangerous to one of the parties as it was disagreeable to the other. But a single expression had escaped her mother, by which Judith could get a clue to the motives that had induced her to marry Hovey, or Hutter; and this she found was that feeling of resentment which so often tempts the injured to inflict wrongs on themselves, by way of heaping coals on the heads of those through whom they have suffered. Judith had enough of the spirit of that mother to comprehend this sentiment, and for a moment did she see the exceeding folly which permitted such revengeful feelings to get the ascendency.

There, what may be called the historical part of the papers ceased. Among the loose fragments, however, was an old newspaper that contained a proclamation offering a reward for the apprehension of certain freebooters by name, among which

was that of Thomas Hovey. The attention of the girl was drawn to the proclamation and to this particular name, by the circumstance that black lines had been drawn under both in ink. Nothing else was found among the papers that could lead to the discovery of either the name or the place of residence of the wife of Hutter. All the dates, signatures, and addresses had been cut from the letters, and wherever a word occurred in the body of the communications that might furnish a clue, it was scrupulously erased. Thus Judith found all her hopes of ascertaining who her parents were defeated, and she was obliged to fall back on her own resources and habits for every thing connected with the future. Her recollection of her mother's manners, conversation, and sufferings, filled up many a gap in the historical facts she had now discovered; and the truth, in its outlines, stood sufficiently distinct before her to take away all desire, indeed, to possess any more details. Throwing herself back in her seat, she simply desired her companion to finish the examination of the other articles in the chest, as it might yet contain something of importance.

"I'll do it, Judith; I'll do it," returned the patient Deerslayer; "but if there's many more letters to read we shall see the sun ag'in, afore you've got through with the reading of them!

Two good hours have you been looking at them bits of papers!"

"They tell me of my parents, Deerslayer, and have settled my plans for life. A girl may be excused who reads about her *own* father and mother, and that too for the first time in her life. I am sorry to have kept you waiting."

"Never mind me, gal; never mind me. It matters little whether I sleep or watch; but, though you be pleasant to look at, and are so handsome, Judith, it is not altogether agreeable to sit so long to behold you shedding tears. I know that tears don't kill, and that some people are better for shedding a few, now and then, especially women; but I'd rather see you smile, at any time, Judith, than see you weep."

This gallant speech was rewarded with a sweet, though a melancholy smile; and then the girl again desired her companion to finish the examination of the chest. The search necessarily continued some time, during which Judith collected her thoughts, and regained her composure. She took no part in the search, leaving every thing to the young man, looking listlessly, herself, at the different articles that came uppermost. Nothing further of much interest or value, however, was found. A sword or two, such as were then worn by gentlemen, some buckles of silver, or so richly plated as to appear silver, and a few handsome

articles of female dress, composed the principal discoveries. It struck both Judith and the Deerslayer, notwithstanding, that some of these things might be made useful in effecting a negotiation with the Iroquois, though the latter saw a difficulty in the way that was not so apparent to the former. The conversation was first renewed in connection with this point.

"And now, Deerslayer," said Judith, "we may talk of yourself, and of the means of getting you out of the hands of the Hurons. Any part, or all of what you have seen in the chest will be cheerfully given by me and Hetty, to set you at liberty."

"Well, that's ginerous—yes, 'tis downright free-hearted, and free-handed, and ginerous. This is the way with women; when they take up a fri'ndship, they do nothing by halves, but are as willing to part with their property as if it had no valie in their eyes. Howsever, while I thank you both, just as much as if the bargain was made, and Rivenoak, or any of the other vagabonds, was here to accept and close the treaty, there's two principal reasons why it can never come to pass, which may be as well told at once, in order no onlikely expectations may be raised in you, or any onjustifiable hopes in me."

"What reason *can* there be, if Hetty and I are willing to part with the trifles for your sake, and the savages are willing to receive them?"

"That's it, Judith—you've got the idees, but they're a little out of their places, as if a hound should take the back'ard instead of the leading scent. That the Mingos will be willing to receive these things, or any more like 'em you may have to offer, is probable enough; but whether they'll pay valie for 'em, is quite another matter. Ask yourself, Judith, if any one should send you a message to say that, for such or such a price, you and Hetty might have that chist and all it holds, whether you'd think it worth your while to waste many words on the bargain?"

"But this chest and all it holds are already ours; there is no reason why we should purchase what is already our own."

"Just so the Mingos calculate! They say the chist is theirs already; or as good as theirs, and they'll not thank anybody for the key."

"I understand you, Deerslayer; surely we are yet in possession of the lake, and we can keep possession of it, until Hurry sends troops to drive off the enemy. This we may certainly do, provided you will stay with us, instead of going back and giving yourself up a prisoner, again, as you now seem determined on."

"That Hurry Harry should talk in this way, is nat'ral, and according to the gifts of the man. He knows no better, and therefore he is little likely to feel, or to act any better; but, Judith, I put it

to your heart and conscience,—would you, *could* you think of me as favourably, as I hope and believe you now do, was I to forget my furlough and not go back to the camp?"

"To think *more* favourably of you than I now do, Deerslayer, would not be easy; but I might continue to think *as* favourably—at least it seems so—I hope I could; for a world wouldn't tempt me to let you do anything that might change my real opinion of you."

"Then don't try to entice me to overlook my furlough, gal! A furlough is a sacred thing among warriors, and men that carry their lives in their hands, as we of the forests do; and what a grievous disapp'intment would it be to old Tamenund, and to Uncas, the father of the Sarpent, and to my other fri'nds in the tribe, if I was so to disgrace myself on my very first war-path? This you will pairceive, moreover, Judith, is without laying any stress on nat'ral gifts and a white man's duties, to say nothing of conscience. The last is king with me, and I try never to dispute his orders."

"I believe you are right, Deerslayer," returned the girl, after a little reflection, and in a saddened voice; "a man like *you* ought not to act, as the selfish and dishonest would be apt to act; *you* must, indeed, go back. We will talk no more of this, then; should I persuade you to anything for

which you would be sorry hereafter, my own regret would not be less than yours. You shall not have it to say, Judith———I scarce know by what name to call myself, now!"

"And why not?—why not, gal? Children take the names of their parents, nat'rally, and by a sort of gift, like; and why shouldn't you and Hetty do as others have done afore ye? Hutter was the old man's name, and Hutter should be the name of his darters;—at least until you are given away in lawful and holy wedlock."

"I am Judith, and Judith only," returned the girl, positively; "until the law gives me a right to another name. Never will I use that of Thomas Hutter again; nor, with my consent, shall Hetty! Hutter was not his own name, I find; but had he a thousand rights to it, it would give none to me. *He* was not my father, thank heaven; though I may have no reason to be proud of him that *was!*"

"This is strange," said Deerslayer, looking steadily at the excited girl, anxious to know more, but unwilling to inquire into matters that did not properly concern him; "yes, this is very strange and uncommon! Thomas Hutter was'nt Thomas Hutter, and his darters weren't his darters! Who then could Thomas Hutter be, and who are his darters?"

"Did you never hear any thing whispered against the former life of this person, Deerslayer?" demanded Judith. "Passing as I did for his child, such reports reached even me."

"I'll not deny it, Judith; no, I'll not deny it. Sartain things have been said, as I've told you; but I'm not very credible as to reports. Young as I am, I've lived long enough to l'arn there's two sorts of characters in the world. Them that is 'arned by deeds, and them that is 'arned by tongues; and so I prefer to see and judge for myself, instead of letting every jaw that chooses to wag become my judge. Hurry Harry spoke pretty plainly of the whole family, as we journeyed this-a-way; and he did hint something consarning Thomas Hutter's having been a free-liver on the water in his younger days. By free-liver, I mean that he made free to live on other men's goods."

"He told you he was a pirate—there is no need of mincing matters between friends. Read that, Deerslayer, and you will see that he told you no more than the truth. This Thomas Hovey was the Thomas Hutter you knew, as is seen by these letters."

As Judith spoke with a flushed cheek and eyes dazzling with the brilliancy of excitement, she held the newspaper towards her companion, point-

ing to the proclamation of a Colonial governor, already mentioned.

"Bless you, Judith!" answered the other, laughing; "you might as well ask me to print that—or, for that matter, to write it. My edication has been altogether in the woods; the only book I read, or care about reading, is the one which God has opened afore all his creatur's, in the noble forests, broad lakes, rolling rivers, blue skies, and the winds, and tempests, and sunshine, and other glorious marvels of the land! This book I can read, and I find it full of wisdom and knowledge."

"I crave your pardon, Deerslayer," said Judith, earnestly, more abashed than was her wont, in finding that she had, inadvertently, made an appeal that might wound her companion's pride. "I had forgotten your manner of life, and least of all did I wish to hurt your feelings."

"Hurt my feelin's!—why should it hurt my feelin's to ask me to read, when I can't read? I'm a hunter—and I may now begin to say a warrior, and no missionary; and, therefore, books and papers are of no account with such as I. No, no, Judith," and here the young man laughed cordially; "not even for wads, seeing that your true deerkiller always uses the hide of a fa'an, if he's got one, or some other bit of leather suitably pre-

pared. There's some that *do* say, all that stands in print is true; in which case, I'll own an unl'arned man must be somewhat of a loser; nevertheless, it can't be truer, than that which God has printed with his own hand in the sky, and the woods, and the rivers, and the springs."

"Well, then, Hutter, or Hovey, was a pirate; and being no father of mine, I cannot wish to call him one. His name shall no longer be my name."

"If you dislike the name of that man, there's the name of your mother, Judith. Her name may serve you just as good a turn."

"I do not know it. I've looked through those papers, Deerslayer, in the hope of finding some hint by which I might discover who my mother was; but there is no more trace of the past; in that respect, than the bird leaves in the air by its flight."

"That's both oncommon, and onreasonable. Parents are bound to give their offspring a name, even though they give 'em nothing else. Now, I come of a humble stock, though we have white gifts and a white natur'; but we are not so poorly off, as to have no name. Bumppo we are called, and I've heard it said," a touch of human vanity glowing on his cheek, "that the time has been

when the Bumppos had more standing and note among mankind than they have just now."

"They never deserved them more, Deerslayer, and the name is a good one; either Hetty or myself, would a thousand times rather be called Hetty Bumppo, or Judith Bumppo, than to be called Hetty or Judith Hutter."

"That's a moral impossible," returned the hunter, good-humouredly, "unless one of you should so far demean herself as to marry me."

Judith could not refrain from smiling, when she found how simply and naturally the conversation had come round to the very point at which she had aimed to bring it. Although far from unfeminine or forward, in either her feelings or her habits, the girl was goaded by a sense of wrongs not altogether merited, incited by the helplessness of a future that seemed to contain no resting-place, and still more influenced by feelings that were as novel to her, as they proved to be active and engrossing. The opening was too good, therefore, to be neglected, though she came to the subject with much of the indirectness and, perhaps, justifiable address of a woman.

"I do not think Hetty will ever marry, Deerslayer," she said; "if your name is to be borne by either of us, it must be borne by me."

"There's been handsome women, too, they tell

me, among the Bumppos, Judith, afore now; and should you take up with the name, oncommon as you be, in this particular, them that knows the family won't be altogether surprised."

"This is not talking as becomes either of us, Deerslayer; for whatever is said on such a subject, between man and woman, should be said seriously, and in sincerity of heart. Forgetting the shame that ought to keep girls silent, until spoken to, in most cases, I will deal with you as frankly as I know one of your generous nature will most like to be dealt by. Can you—do you think, Deerslayer, that you could be happy with such a wife as a woman like myself would make?"

"A woman like you, Judith! But where's the sense in trifling about such a thing? A woman like you, that is handsome enough to be a captain's lady, and fine enough, and, so far as I know, edication enough, would be little apt to think of becoming my wife. I suppose young gals that feel themselves to be smart, and know themselves to be handsome, find a sartain satisfaction in passing their jokes ag'in them that's neither, like a poor Delaware hunter."

This was said good-naturedly, but not without a betrayal of feeling which showed that something like mortified sensibility was blended with the reply. Nothing could have occurred more

likely to awaken all Judith's generous regrets, or to aid her in her purpose, by adding the stimulant of a disinterested desire to atone, to her other impulses, and clothing all under a guise so winning and natural, as greatly to lessen the unpleasant feature of a forwardness unbecoming the sex.

"You do me injustice if you suppose I have any such thought, or wish," she answered, earnestly. "Never was I more serious in my life, or more willing to abide by any agreement that we may make to-night. I have had many suitors, Deerslayer—nay, scarce an unmarried trapper or hunter has been in at the lake these four years, who has not offered to take me away with him, and I fear some that were married, too—"

"Ay, I'll warrant that!" interrupted the other —"I'll warrant all that! Take 'em as a body, Judith, 'arth don't hold a set of men more given to theirselves, and less given to God and the law."

"Not one of them would I—could I listen to; happily for myself, perhaps, has it been that such was the case. There have been well-looking youths among them, too, as you may have seen in your acquaintance, Henry March."

"Yes, Harry is sightly to the eye, though, to my idees, less so to the judgment. I thought, at

first, you meant to have him, Judith, I did; but afore he went, it was easy enough to verify that the same lodge wouldn't be big enough for you both."

"You have done me justice in that at least, Deerslayer. Hurry is a man I could never marry, though he were ten times more comely to the eye, and a hundred times more stout of heart, than he really is."

"Why not, Judith—why not? I own I'm cur'ous to know why a youth like Hurry shouldn't find favour with a maiden like you?"

"Then you shall know, Deerslayer," returned the girl, gladly availing herself of the opportunity of extolling the qualities which had so strongly interested her in her listener; hoping by these means covertly to approach the subject nearest her heart. "In the first place, looks in a man are of no importance with a woman, provided he is manly, and not disfigured or deformed."

"There I can't altogether agree with you," returned the other thoughtfully, for he had a very humble opinion of his own personal appearance; "I have noticed that the comeliest warriors commonly get the best-looking maidens of the tribe for wives; and the Sarpent, yonder, who is sometimes wonderful in his paint, is a

gineral favourite with all the Delaware young women, though he takes to Hist himself as if she was the only beauty on 'arth!"

"It may be so with Indians, but it is different with white girls. So long as a young man has a straight and manly frame, that promises to make him able to protect a woman, and to keep want from the door, it is all they ask of the figure. Giants like Hurry may do for grenadiers, but are of little account as lovers. Then as to the face, an honest look, one that answers for the heart within, is of more value than any shape or colour, or eyes, or teeth, or trifles like them. The last may do for girls, but who thinks of them at all in a hunter, or a warrior, or a husband! If there are women so silly, Judith's not among them."

"Well, this is wonderful! I always thought that handsome liked handsome, as riches love riches!"

"It may be so with you men, Deerslayer, but it is not always so with us women. We like stout-hearted men, but we wish to see them modest; sure on a hunt, or the war-path, ready to die for the right, and unwilling to yield to the wrong. Above all, we wish for honesty —tongues that are not used to say what the mind does not mean, and hearts that feel a

little for others, as well as for themselves. A true-hearted girl could die for such a husband! while the boaster and the double-tongued suitor, gets to be as hateful to the sight as he is to the mind."

Judith spoke bitterly, and with her usual force, but her listener was too much struck with the novelty of the sensation he experienced to advert to her manner. There was something so soothing to the humility of a man of his temperament to hear qualities that he could not but know he possessed himself, thus highly extolled by the loveliest female he had ever beheld, that, for the moment, his faculties seemed suspended in a natural and excusable pride. Then it was that the idea of the possibility of such a creature as Judith becoming his companion for life, first crossed his mind. The image was so pleasant, and so novel, that he continued completely absorbed by it for more than a minute, totally regardless of the beautiful reality that was seated before him, watching the expression of his upright and truth-telling countenance with a keenness that gave her a very fair, if not an absolutely accurate clue to his thoughts. Never before had so pleasing a vision floated before the mind's-eye of the young hunter; but, accustomed most to practical things,

and little addicted to submitting to the power of his imagination, even while possessed of so much true poetical feeling in connection with natural objects in particular, he soon recovered his reason, and smiled at his own weakness, as the fancied picture faded from his mental sight, and left him the simple, untaught, but highly moral being he was, seated in the ark of Thomas Hutter at midnight with the lovely countenance of its late owner's reputed daughter, beaming on him with anxious scrutiny, by the light of the solitary lamp.

"You're wonderful handsome, and enticing, and pleasing to look on, Judith!" he exclaimed in his simplicity, as fact resumed its ascendency over fancy. "Wonderful! I don't remember ever to have seen so beautiful a gal, even among the Delawares; and I'm not astonished that Hurry Harry went away soured as well as dis-app'inted!"

"Would you have had me, Deerslayer, become the wife of such a man as Henry March?"

"There's that which is in his favour, and there's that which is ag'in him. To my taste, Hurry wouldn't make the best of husbands, but I fear that the tastes of most young women, hereaway, wouldn't be so hard upon him."

"No—no—Judith without a name, would

never consent to be called Judith March! Any thing would be better than *that*."

"Judith Bumppo wouldn't sound as well, gal; and there's many names that would fall short of March, in pleasing the ear."

"Ah! Deerslayer, the pleasantness of the sound, in such cases, does not come through the ear, but through the heart. Every thing is agreeable when the heart is satisfied. Were Natty Bumppo Henry March, and Henry March Natty Bumppo, I might think the name of March better than it is; or were he you, I should fancy the name of Bumppo horrible!"

"That's just it—yes, that's the reason of the matter. Now, I'm nat'rally avarse to sarpents, and I hate even the word, which the missionaries tell me, comes from human natur', on account of a sartain sarpent at the creation of the 'arth, that outwitted the first woman; yet, ever since Chingachgook has 'arned the title he bears, why the sound is as pleasant to my ears as the whistle of the whip-poor-will of a calm evening—it is. The feelin's make all the difference in the world, Judith, in the natur' of sounds; ay, even in that of looks, too."

"This is so true, Deerslayer, that I am surprised you should think it remarkable a girl, who may have some comeliness herself, should not

think it necessary that her husband should have the same advantage, or what you fancy an advantage. To me, looks in a man are nothing, provided his countenance be as honest as his heart."

"Yes, honesty is a great advantage in the long-run; and they that are the most apt to forget it, in the beginning, are the most apt to l'arn it in the end. Nevertheless, there's more, Judith, that look to present profit than to the benefit that is to come after a time. One they think a sartainty, and the other an onsartainty. I'm glad, howsever, that *you* look at the thing in its true light, and not in the way in which so many is apt to deceive themselves."

"I do thus look at it, Deerslayer," returned the girl with emphasis, still shrinking with a woman's sensitiveness from a direct offer of her hand, "and can say, from the bottom of my heart, that I would rather trust my happiness to a man whose truth and feelings may be depended on, than to a false-tongued and false-hearted wretch that had chests of gold, and houses and lands—yes, though he were even seated on a throne!"

"These are brave words, Judith; they're downright brave words; but do you think that the feelin's would keep 'em company, did the ch'ice.

actually lie afore you? If a gay gallant in a scarlet coat stood on one side, with his head smelling like a deer's foot, his face smooth and blooming as your own, his hands as white and soft as if God hadn't bestowed 'em that man might live by the sweat of his brow, and his step as lofty as dancing teachers and a light heart could make it; and on the other side stood one that has passed his days in the open air 'till his forehead is as red as his cheek; had cut his way through swamps and bushes till his hand was as rugged as the oaks he slept under; had trodden on the scent of game 'till his step was as stealthy as the catamount's, and had no other pleasant odour about him than such as natur' gives in the free air and the forest—now, if both these men stood here, as suitors for your feelin's, which do you think would win your favour?"

Judith's fine face flushed; for the picture that her companion had so simply drawn of a gay officer of the garrisons had once been particularly grateful to her imagination, though experience and disappointment had not only chilled all her affections, but given them a backward current, and the passing image had a momentary influence on her feelings; but the mounting colour was succeeded by a paleness so deadly as to make her appear ghastly.

"As God is my judge," the girl solemnly answered, "did both these men stand before me, as I may say one of them does, my choice, if I know my own heart, would be the latter. I have no wish for a husband who is any way better than myself."

"This is pleasant to listen to, and might lead a young man in time to forget his own onworthiness, Judith! However, you hardly think all that you say. A man like me is too rude and ignorant for one that has had such a mother to teach her; vanity is nat'ral, I do believe; but vanity like that would surpass reason!"

"Then you do not know of what a woman's heart is capable! Rude *you* are not, Deerslayer; nor can one be called ignorant that has studied what is before his eyes as closely as you have done. When the affections are concerned, all things appear in their pleasantest colours, and trifles are overlooked or are forgotten. When the heart feels a sunshine, nothing is gloomy, even dull-looking objects seeming gay and bright; and so it would be between you and the woman who should love you, even though your wife might happen, in some matters, to possess what the world calls the advantage over you."

"Judith, you come of people altogether above mine, in the world; and onequal matches, like

onequal fri'ndships, can't often tarminate kindly. I speak of this matter altogether as a fanciful thing, since it's not very likely that *you*, at least, would be able to treat it as a matter that can ever come to pass."

Judith fastened her deep blue eyes on the open, frank countenance of her companion, as if she would read his soul. Nothing there betrayed any covert meaning, and she was obliged to admit to herself that he regarded the conversation as argumentative rather than positive, and that he was still without any active suspicion that her feelings were seriously involved in the issue. At first she felt offended; then she saw the injustice of making the self-abasement and modesty of the hunter a charge against him; and this novel difficulty gave a piquancy to the state of affairs that rather increased her interest in the young man. At that critical instant, a change of plan flashed on her mind, and with a readiness of invention that is peculiar to the quick-witted and ingenious, she adopted a scheme by which she hoped effectually to bind him to her person. This scheme partook equally of her fertility of invention, and of the decision and boldness of her character. That the conversation might not terminate too abruptly, however, or any suspicion of her design exist, she answered the last remark of Deerslayer as earnestly

and as truly as if her original intention remained unaltered.

"I certainly have no reason to boast of parentage, after what I have seen this night," said the girl, in a saddened voice. "I had a mother, it is true; but of her name, even I am ignorant: and as for my father, it is better perhaps that I should never know who he was, lest I speak too bitterly of him!"

"Judith," said Deerslayer, taking her hand kindly, and with a manly sincerity that went directly to the girl's heart, "'tis better to say no more to-night. Sleep on what you've seen and felt; in the morning, things that now look gloomy may look more cheerful. Above all, never do any thing in bitterness, or because you feel as if you'd like to take revenge on yourself for other people's backslidings. All that has been said or done atween us, this night, is your secret, and shall never be talked of by me, even with the Sarpent; and you may be sartain if he can't get it out of me, no man can. If your parents have been faulty, let the darter be less so; remember that you're young, and the youthful may always hope for better times; that you're more quick-witted than usual, and such ginerally get the better of difficulties; and that as for beauty, you're oncommon; this is an advantage with all. It is time to get a little rest, for to-

morrow is like to prove a trying day to some of us."

Deerslayer arose as he spoke, and Judith had no choice but to comply. The chest was closed and secured, and they parted in silence; she to take her place by the side of Hist and Hetty, and he to seek a blanket on the floor of the cabin he was in. It was not five minutes ere the young man was in a deep sleep; but the girl continued awake for a long time. She scarce knew whether to lament, or to rejoice at having failed in making herself understood. On the one hand, were her womanly sensibilities spared; on the other, was the disappointment of defeated, or at least of delayed expectations, and the uncertainty of a future that looked so dark. Then came the new resolution, and the bold project for the morrow; and when drowsiness finally shut her eyes, they closed on a scene of success and happiness, that was pictured by the fancy, under the influence of a sanguine temperament and a happy invention.

CHAPTER V.

"But, mother, now a shade has past
Athwart my brightest visions here,
A cloud of darkest gloom has wrapt
The remnant of my brief career!
No song, no echo can I win;
The sparkling fount has dried within."

MARGARET DAVIDSON.

Hist and Hetty arose with the return of light, leaving Judith still buried in sleep. It took but a minute for the first to complete her toilet. Her long coal-black hair was soon adjusted in a simple knot, the calico dress belted tight to her slender waist, and her little feet concealed in their gaudily ornamented moccasins. When attired, she left her companion employed in household affairs, and went herself on the platform, to breathe the pure air of the morning. Here she found Chingachgook studying the shores of the lake, the mountains, and the heavens, with the sagacity of a man of the woods, and the gravity of an Indian.

The meeting between the lovers was simple,

but affectionate. The chief showed a manly kindness, equally removed from boyish weakness and haste; while the girl betrayed in her smile and half-averted looks, the bashful tenderness of her sex. Neither spoke, unless it were with the eyes, though each understood the other as fully as if a vocabulary of words and protestations had been poured out. Hist seldom appeared to more advantage than at that moment; for, just from her rest and ablutions, there was a freshness about her youthful form and face, that the toils of the wood do not always permit to be exhibited, by even the juvenile and pretty. Then Judith had not only imparted some of her own skill in the toilet during their short intercourse, but she had actually bestowed a few well-selected ornaments from her own stores, that contributed not a little to set off the natural graces of the Indian maid. All this the lover saw and felt, for a moment his countenance was illuminated with a look of pleasure; but it soon grew grave again, and became saddened and anxious. The stools used the previous night were still standing on the platform; placing two against the walls of the hut, he seated himself on one, making a gesture to his companion to take the other. This done, he continued thoughtful and silent for quite a minute, maintaining the reflecting dignity of one born to

take his seat at the council-fire, while Hist was furtively watching the expression of his face, patient and submissive, as became a woman of her people. Then the young warrior stretched his arm before him, as if to point out the glories of the scene at that witching hour, when the whole panorama, as usual, was adorned by the mellow distinctness of early morning, sweeping with his hand slowly over lake, hills and heavens. The girl followed the movement with pleased wonder, smiling as each new beauty met her gaze.

"Hugh!" exclaimed the chief, in admiration of a scene so unusual even to him, for this was the first lake he had ever beheld. "This is the country of the Manitou! It is too good for Mingos, Hist; but the curs of that tribe are howling in packs, through the woods. They think that the Delawares are asleep, over the mountains."

"All but one of them is, Chingachgook. There is one here; and he is of the blood of Uncas!"

"What is one warrior against a tribe?—The path to our villages is very long and crooked, and we shall travel it under a cloudy sky. I am afraid, too, Honeysuckle of the Hills, that we shall travel it alone!"

Hist understood the allusion, and it made her sad; though it sounded sweet to her ears to be

compared by the warrior she so loved, to the most fragrant, and the pleasantest of all the wild-flowers of her native woods. Still she continued silent, as became her when the allusion was to a grave interest that men could best control, though it exceeded the power of education to conceal the smile that gratified feeling brought to her pretty mouth.

"When the sun is thus," continued the Delaware pointing to the zenith, by simply casting upward a hand and finger by a play of the wrist, "the great hunter of our tribe will go back to the Hurons, to be treated like a bear, that they roast and skin, even on full stomachs."

"The Great Spirit may soften their hearts, and not suffer them to be so bloody-minded. I have lived among the Hurons, and know them. They have hearts, and will not forget their own children, should they fall into the hands of the Delawares."

"A wolf is for ever howling; a hog will always eat. They have lost warriors; even their women will call out for vengeance. The pale-face has the eyes of an eagle, and can see into a Mingo's heart; he looks for no mercy. There is a cloud over his spirit, though it is not before his face."

A long, thoughtful pause succeeded, during which Hist stealthily took the hand of the chief,

as if seeking his support, though she scarce ventured to raise her eyes to a countenance that was now literally becoming terrible, under the conflicting passions, and stern resolution that were struggling in the breast of its owner.

"What will the Son of Uncas do?" the girl at length timidly asked. "He is a chief, and is already celebrated in council, though so young; what does his heart tell him is wisest; does the head too speak the same words as the heart?"

"What does Wah-ta!-Wah say, at a moment when my dearest friend is in such danger. The smallest birds sing the sweetest; it is always pleasant to hearken to their songs. I wish I could hear the Wren of the Woods in my difficulty; its note would reach deeper than the ear."

Again Hist experienced the profound gratification that the language of praise can always awaken, when uttered by those we love. The "Honeysuckle of the Hills" was a term often applied to the girl, by the young men of the Delawares, though it never sounded so sweet in her ears, as from the lips of Chingachgook; but the latter alone had ever styled her the Wren of the Woods. With him, however, it had got to be a familiar phrase, and it was past expression pleasant to the listener, since it conveyed to her mind the idea that her advice and sentiments were

as acceptable to her future husband, as the tones of her voice and modes of conveying them were agreeable; uniting the two things most prized by an Indian girl, as coming from her betrothed, admiration for a valued physical advantage, with respect for her opinion. She pressed the hand she held between both her own, and answered—

"Wah-ta!-Wah says that neither she nor the Great Serpent could ever laugh again, or ever sleep without dreaming of the Hurons, should the Deerslayer die under a Mingo tomahawk, and they do nothing to save him. She would rather go back, and start on her long path alone, than let such a dark cloud pass before her happiness."

"Good! The husband, and the wife will have but one heart; they will see with the same eyes, and feel with the same feelings."

What further was said need not be related here. That the conversation was of Deerslayer, and his hopes, has been seen already, but the decision that was come to, will better appear in the course of the narrative. The youthful pair were yet conversing when the sun appeared above the tops of the pines, and the light of a brilliant American day streamed down into the valley, bathing "in deep joy" the lake, the forests and the mountain sides. Just at that instant Deerslayer came out of the cabin of the ark, and

stepped upon the platform. His first look was at the cloudless heavens, then his rapid glance took in the entire panorama of land and water, when he had leisure for a friendly nod at his friends, and a cheerful smile for Hist.

"Well," he said, in his usual composed manner, and pleasant voice; "he that sees the sun set in the west, and wakes 'arly enough in the morning, will be sartain to find him coming back ag'in in the east, like a buck that is hunted round his ha'nts. I dare say, now, Hist, you 've beheld this, time and ag'in, and yet it never entered into your galish mind to ask the reason?"

Both Chingachgook and his betrothed looked up at the luminary, with an air that betokened sudden wonder, and then they gazed at each other, as if to seek the solution of the difficulty. Familiarity deadens the sensibilities, even as connected with the gravest natural phenomena; and never before had these simple beings thought of inquiring into a movement that was of daily occurrence, however puzzling it might appear on investigation. When the subject was thus suddenly started, it struck both alike, and at the same instant, with some such force, as any new and brilliant proposition in the natural sciences would strike the scholar. Chingachgook alone saw fit to answer.

"The pale-faces know every thing," he said; "can they tell us why the sun hides his face, when he goes back at night."

"Ay, that is downright red-skin l'arnin'," returned the other, laughing; though he was not altogether insensible to the pleasure of proving the superiority of his race by solving the difficulty, which he set about doing in his own peculiar manner. "Hark'ee, Sarpent," he continued more gravely, though too simply for affectation; "this is easierly explained than an Indian brain may fancy. The sun, while he seems to keep travelling in the heavens, never budges, but it is the 'arth that turns round; and any one can understand, if he is placed on the side of a mill-wheel, for instance, when it 's in motion, that he must sometimes see the heavens, while he is at other times under water. There 's no great secret in that, but plain natur'; the difficulty being in setting the 'arth in motion."

"How does my brother know that the earth turns round?" demanded the Indian. "Can he see it?"

"Well, that 's been a puzzler I will own, Delaware; for I 've often tried, but never could fairly make it out. Sometimes I 've consaited that I could; and then ag'in, I 've been obliged to own it an onpossibility. Howsever, turn it does, as

all my people say, and you ought to believe 'em, since they can foretell eclipses, and other prodigies, that used to fill the tribes with terror, according to your own traditions of such things."

"Good. This is true; no red man will deny it. When a wheel turns, my eyes can see it—they do not see the earth turn."

"Ay, that's what I call sense-obstinacy! Seeing is believing, they say; and what they can't see, some men won't in the least give credit to. Nevertheless, chief, that isn't quite as good reason as it may at first seem. You believe in the Great Spirit, I know; and yet, I conclude, it would puzzle you to show where you see him!"

"Chingachgook can see Him everywhere—everywhere in *good* things—the Evil Spirit in *bad*. Here, in the lake; there, in the forest; yonder, in the clouds; in Hist, in the son of Uncas, in Tamenund, in Deerslayer. The Evil Spirit is in the Mingos. That I know; I do not see the earth turn round."

"I don't wonder they call you the Sarpent, Delaware; no, I don't! There 's always a meaning in your words, and there 's often a meaning in your countenance, too! Notwithstanding your answers doesn't quite meet my idee. That God is obsarvable in all nat'ral objects is allowable; but then he is not parceptible in the way I mean.

You know there is a Great Spirit by his works, and the pale-faces know that the 'arth turns round by its works. This is the reason of the matter, though how it is to be explained, is more than I can exactly tell you. This I know; all my people consait that fact; and what all the pale-faces consait, is very likely to be true."

"When the sun is in the top of that pine to-morrow, where will my brother Deerslayer be?"

The hunter started, and he looked intently, though totally without alarm at his friend. Then he signed for him to follow, and led the way into the ark, where he might pursue the subject unheard by those whose feelings he feared might get the mastery over their reason. Here he stopped, and pursued the conversation in a more confidential tone.

"'Twas a little onreasonable in you, Sarpent," he said, "to bring up such a subject afore Hist, and when the young woman of my own colour might overhear what was said. Yes, 'twas a little more onreasonable than most things that you do. No matter; Hist didn't comprehend, and the other didn't hear. Howsever, the question is easier put than answered. No mortal can say where he will be when the sun rises to-morrow. I will ask you the same question, Sarpent, and should like to hear what answer you can give."

"Chingachgook will be with his friend Deerslayer; if he be in the land of spirits, the Great Serpent will crawl at his side; if beneath yonder sun, its warmth and light shall fall on both."

"I understand you, Delaware," returned the other, touched with the simple self-devotion of his friend. "Such language is as plain in one tongue as in another; it comes from the heart, and goes to the heart, too. 'Tis well to think so, and it may be well to *say* so, for that matter, but it would not be well to *do* so, Sarpent. You are no longer alone in life; for, though you have the lodges to change, and other ceremonies to go through, afore Hist becomes your lawful wife, yet are you as good as married in all that bears on the feelin's, and joy, and misery. No, no; Hist must not be desarted, because a cloud is passing atween you and me a little onexpectedly, and a little darker than we may have looked for."

"Hist is a daughter of the Mohicans; she knows how to obey her husband. Where he goes she will follow. *Both* will be with the Great Hunter of the Delawares, when the sun shall be in the pine to-morrow."

"The Lord bless and protect you, Chief; this is downright madness! Can either, or both of you alter a Mingo natur'? Will your grand looks, or Hist's tears and beauty, change a wolf

into a squirrel, or make a catamount as innocent as a fa'an! No, Sarpent, you will think better of this matter, and leave me in the hands of God. After all, it's by no means sartain that the scamps design the torments, for they may yet be pitiful, and bethiñk them of the wickedness of such a course; though it *is* but a hopeless expectation to look forward to a Mingo's turning aside from evil, and letting marcy get uppermost in his heart. Nevertheless, no one knows to a sartainty what will happen; and young creatur's like Hist ar'n't to be risked on onsartainties. This marrying is altogether a different undertaking from what some young men fancy. Now, if you was single, or as good as single, Delaware, I should expect you to be act*y*ve and stirring about the camp of the vagabonds, from sunrise to sunset, sarcumventing, and contriving, as restless as a hound off the scent, and doing all manner of things to help me and to distract the inimy; but two are oftener feebler than one, and we must take things as they are, and not as we want 'em to be."

"Listen, Deerslayer," returned the Indian, with an emphasis so decided, as to show how much he was in earnest. "If Chingachgook was in the hands of the Hurons, what would my pale-face brother do? Sneak off to the Delaware villages, and say to the chiefs, and old men, and young

warriors—'See; here is Wah-ta!-wah; she is safe, but a little tired; and here is the Son of Uncas, not as tired as the Honeysuckle, being stronger, but just as safe.' Would he do this?"

"Well, that's oncommon ingen'ous; it's cunning enough for a Mingo himself. The Lord only knows what put it into your head to ask such a question. What would I do? Why, in the first place, Hist wouldn't be likely to be in my company at all, for she would stay as near you as possible, and therefore all that part about *her* could'nt be said without talking nonsense. As for her being tired, that would fall through, too, if she didn't go, and no part of your speech would be likely to come from me: so you see, Sarpent, reason is ag'in you, and you may as well give it up, since to hold out ag'in reason is no way becoming a chief of your character and repitation."

"My brother is not himself; he forgets that he is talking to one who has sat at the council fires of his nation," returned the other kindly. "When men speak, they should say that which does not go in at one side of the head and out at the other. Their words shouldn't be feathers, so light that a wind, which does not ruffle the water, can blow them away. He has not answered my question; when a chief puts a question his friend should not talk of other things."

"I understand you Delaware; I understand well enough what you mean, and truth won't allow me to say otherwise. Still, it's not as easy to answer as you seem to think, for this plain reason. You wish me to say what I would do, if I had a betrothed as you have here, on the lake, and a fri'nd yonder in the Huron camp in danger of the torments. That's it, isn't it?"

The Indian bowed his head silently, and always with unmoved gravity, though his eye twinkled at the sight of the other's embarrassment.

"Well, I never had a betrothed; never had the kind of feelin's towards any young woman, that you have towards Hist; though the Lord knows my feelin's are kind enough towards 'em all. Still my heart, as they call it, in such matters isn't touched, and therefore I can't say what I would do. A fri'nd pulls strong; that I know by exper'ence, Sarpent; but, by all that I've seen and heard consarning love, I'm led to think that a betrothed pulls stronger."

"True, but the betrothed of Chingachgook does not pull towards the lodges of the Delawares; she pulls towards the camp of the Hurons."

"She's a noble gal, for all her little feet and hands that an't bigger than a child's, and a voice that's as pleasant as a mocker's; she's a noble gal, and like the stock of her sires! Well, what

is it, Sarpent? for I conclude she hasn't changed her mind, and mean to give herself up, and turn Huron wife. What is it you want?"

"Wah-ta!-wah will never live in the wigwam of an Iroquois," answered the Delaware, drily. "She has little feet, but they can carry her to the villages of her people; she has small hands, too, but her mind is large. My brother will see what we can do when the time shall come, rather than let him die under Mingo torments."

"Attempt nothing heedlessly, Delaware," said the other, earnestly; "I suppose you must and will have your way; and, on the whole, it's right you should; for you'd neither be happy, unless something was undertaken. But attempt nothing heedlessly. I didn't expect you'd quit the lake, while my matter remained in unsartainty; but remember, Sarpent, that no torments that Mingo ingenuity can invent, no ta'ntings and revilings, no burnings and roastings, and nail-tearings, nor any other onhuman contrivance, can so soon break down my spirit, as to find that you and Hist have fallen into the power of the inemy, in striving to do something for my good."

"The Delawares are prudent. The Deerslayer will not find them running into a strange camp with their eyes shut."

Here the dialogue terminated. Hetty soon

announced that the breakfast was ready, and the whole party were soon seated around the simple board in the usual primitive manner of borderers. Judith was the last to take her seat, pale, silent, and betraying in her countenance that she had passed a painful if not a sleepless night. At this meal scarce a syllable was exchanged, all the females manifesting want of appetite, though the two men were unchanged in this particular. It was early when the party arose, and there still remained several hours before it would be necessary for the prisoner to leave his friends. The knowledge of this circumstance and the interest all felt in his welfare, induced the whole to assemble on the platform again, in the desire to be near the expected victim, to listen to his discourse, and, if possible, to show their interest in him by anticipating his wishes. Deerslayer, himself, so far as human eyes could penetrate, was wholly unmoved, conversing cheerfully and naturally, though he avoided any direct allusion to the expected and great event of the day. If any evidence could be discovered of his thoughts reverting to that painful subject at all, it was in the manner in which he spoke of death and the last great change.

"Grieve not, Hetty," he said; for it was while consoling this simple-minded girl for the loss of

her parents that he thus betrayed his feelings; "since God has app'inted that all must die. Your parents, or them you fancied your parents, which is the same thing, have gone afore you; this is only in the order of natur', my good gal, for the aged go first and the young follow. But one that had a mother like your'n, Hetty, can be at no loss to hope the best, as to how matters will turn out in another world. The Delaware, here, and Hist believe in happy hunting-grounds, and have idees befitting their notions and gifts, as red-skins; but we, who are of white blood, hold altogether to a different doctrine. Still, I rather conclude our heaven is their land of spirits, and that the path which leads to it will be travelled by all colours alike. 'Tis onpossible for the wicked to enter on it, I will allow; but fr'inds can scarce be separated, though they are not of the same race on 'arth. Keep up your spirits, poor Hetty, and look forward to the day when you will meet your mother ag'in, and that without pain or sorrowing."

"I do expect to see mother," returned the truth-telling and simple girl, "but what will become of father?"

"That's a non-plusser, Delaware," said the hunter, in the Indian dialect—"yes; that is a downright non-plusser! The Muskrat was not a saint on 'arth, and it's fair to guess he'll not be

much of one hereafter? Howsever, Hetty,"—dropping into the English by an easy transition—"howsever, Hetty, we must all hope for the best. That is wisest, and it is much the easiest to the mind if one can only do it. I recommend to you trusting to God, and putting down all misgivings and faint-hearted feelin's. It's wonderful, Judith, how different people have different notions about the futur', some fancying one change, and some fancying another. I've known white teachers that have thought all was spirit, hereafter; and them, ag'in, that believed the body will be transported to another world, much as the red-skins themselves imagine, and that we shall walk about in the flesh and know each other, and talk together, and be fri'nds there as we've been fri'nds here."

"Which of these opinions is most pleasing to *you*, Deerslayer?" asked the girl, willing to indulge his melancholy mood, and far from being free from its influence herself. "Would it be disagreeable to think that you should meet all who are now on this platform in another world? Or, have you known enough of us here, to be glad to see us no more?"

"The last would make death a bitter portion; yes, it would. It's eight good years since the Sarpent and I began to hunt together, and the thought that we were never to meet ag'in, would

be a hard thought to me. He looks forward to the time when we shall chase a sort of spirit-deer in company on plains where there's no thorns, or brambles, or marshes, or other hardships to overcome; whereas, I can't fall into all these notions, seeing that they appear to be ag'in reason. Spirits can't eat, nor have they any use for clothes; and deer can only rightfully be chased to be slain, or slain, unless it be for the venison, or the hides. Now I find it hard to suppose that blessed spirits can be put to chasing game without an object, tormenting the dumb animals just for the pleasure and agreeableness of their own amusements. I never yet pulled a trigger on buck or doe, Judith, unless when food or clothes was wanting."

"The recollection of which, Deerslayer, must now be a great consolation to you."

"It is the thought of such things, my fr'inds, that enables a man to keep his furlough. It might be done without it, I own; for the worst red-skins sometimes do their duty in this matter; but it makes that which might otherwise be hard, easy, if not altogether to our liking. Nothing truly makes a bolder heart, than a light conscience."

Judith turned paler than ever, but she struggled for self-command, and succeeded in obtaining it. The conflict had been severe, however, and it left her so little disposed to speak, that Hetty pur-

sued the subject. This was done in the simple manner natural to the girl.

"It would be cruel to kill the poor deer," she said, "in this world, or any other, when you don't want their venison, or their skins. No good white-man, and no good red-man would do it. But it's wicked for a Christian to talk about chasing any thing in heaven. Such things are not done before the face of God, and the missionary that teaches these doctrines can't be a true missionary. He must be a wolf in sheep's clothing. I suppose you know what a sheep is, Deerslayer?"

"That I do, gal; and a useful creatur' it is, to such as like cloths better than skins, for winter garments. I understand the natur' of sheep, though I've had but little to do with 'em; and the natur' of wolves too, and can take the idee of a wolf in the fleece of a sheep, though I think it would be likely to prove a hot jacket for such a beast, in the warm months!"

"And sin, and hypocrisy are hot jackets, as *they* will find, who put them on," returned Hetty, positively; "so the wolf would be no worse off than the sinner. Spirits don't hunt, nor trap, nor fish, nor do any thing that vain men undertake, since they've none of the longings of this world to feed. Oh! mother told me all that years ago, and I didn't wish to hear it denied."

"Well, my good Hetty, in that case you'd better not broach your doctrine to Hist when she and you are alone, and the young Delaware maiden is inclined to talk religion. It's her fixed idee, I know, that the good warriors do nothing but hunt and fish in the other world, though I don't believe that she fancies any of them are brought down to trapping, which is no empl'yment for a brave. But of hunting and fishing accordin' to her notion, they've their fill; and that, too, over the most agreeablest hunting-grounds, and among game that is never out of season, and which is just act*y*ve and instinct*y*ve enough to give a pleasure to death. So I wouldn't recommend it to you to start Hist on that idee."

"Hist can't be so wicked as to believe any such thing," returned the other earnestly. "No Indian hunts after he is dead."

"No wicked Indian, I grant you; no wicked Indian, sartainly. He is obliged to carry the ammunition and to look on without sharing in the sport, and to cook, and to light the fires, and to do every thing that isn't manful. Now mind; I don't tell you these are my idees, but they are Hist's idees, and, therefore, for the sake of peace, the less you say to her ag'in 'em the better."

"And what are your ideas of the fate of an Indian in the other world?" demanded Judith, who had just found her voice.

"Ah! gal, any thing but that! I am too christianized to expect any thing so fanciful as hunting and fishing after death; nor do I believe there is one Manitou for the red-skin, and another for a pale-face. You find different colours on 'arth, as any one may see, but you don't find different natur's. Different gifts, but only one natur."

"In what is a gift different from a nature? Is not nature itself a gift from God?"

"Sartain; that's quick-thoughted and creditable, Judith, though the main idee is wrong. A natur' is the creatur' itself; its wishes, wants, idees and feelin's, as all are born in him. This natur' never can be changed in the main, though it may undergo some increase or lessening. Now, gifts come of sarcumstances. Thus, if you put a man in a town, he gets town gifts; in a settlement, settlement gifts; in a forest, gifts of the woods. A soldier has soldierly gifts, and a missionary preaching gifts. All these increase and strengthen, until they get to fortify natur' as it might be, and excuse a thousand acts and idees. Still the creatur' is the same at the bottom; just as a man who is clad in regimentals

is the same as the man that is clad in skins. The garments make a change to the eye, and some change in the conduct perhaps; but none in the man. Herein lies the apology for gifts; seein' that you expect different conduct from one in silks, and satins, from one in homespun; though the Lord who didn't make the dresses, but who made the creatur's themselves, looks only at his own work. This isn't ra'al missionary doctrine, but it's as near it as a man of white colour need be. Ah's me! little did I think to be talking of such matters to-day, but it's one of our weaknesses never to know what will come to pass. Step into the ark with me, Judith, for a minute. I wish to convarse with you."

Judith complied with a willingness she could scarce conceal. Following the hunter into the cabin, she took a seat on a stool, while the young man brought Killdeer, the rifle she had given him, out of a corner, and placed himself on another, with the weapon laid upon his knees. After turning the piece round and round, and examining its lock and its breech with a sort of affectionate assiduity, he laid it down and proceeded to the subject which had induced him to desire the interview.

"I understood you, Judith, to say that you

gave me this rifle," he said. "I agreed to take it because a young wōman can have no great use for fire-arms. The we'pon has a great name, and it desarves it, and ought of right to be carried by some known and sure hand, for the best reputation may be lost by careless and thoughtless handling."

"Can it be in better hands than those in which it is now, Deerslayer? Thomas Hutter seldom missed with it: with you, it must turn out to be—"

"Sartain death!" interrupted the hunter, laughing. "I once know'd a beaver-man that had a piece he called by that very name, but 'twas all boastfulness, for I've seen Delawares that were as true with arrows at a short range. Howsever, I'll not deny my gifts—for *this* is a gift, Judith, and not natur'—but I'll not deny my gifts, and therefore allow that the rifle couldn't well be in better hands than it is at present. But how long will it be likely to remain there? Atween us, the truth may be said, though I shouldn't like to have it known to the Sarpent and Hist; but to *you* the truth may be spoken, since *your* feelin's will not be as likely to be tormented by it as those of them that have known me longer and better. How long am I like to own this rifle, or any other? That is

a serious question for our thoughts to rest on, and should that happen which is so likely to happen, Killdeer would be without an owner."

Judith listened with apparent composure, though the conflict within came near overpowering her. Appreciating the singular character of her companion, however, she succeeded in appearing calm; though, had not his attention been drawn exclusively to the rifle, a man of his keenness of observation could scarce have failed to detect the agony of mind with which the girl had hearkened to his words. Her great self-command, notwithstanding, enabled her to pursue the subject in a way still to deceive him.

"What would you have me do with the weapon," she asked, "should that which you seem to expect, take place?"

"That's just what I wanted to speak to you about, Judith—that's just it. There's Chingachgook, now, though far from being perfect sartainty with a rifle—for few red-skins ever get to be *that*—though far from being perfect sartainty, he is respectable, and is coming on. Nevertheless, he is my fri'nd; and all the better fri'nd, perhaps, because there never can be any hard feelin's atween us, touchin' our gifts; his'n bein' red, and mine bein' altogether white. Now, I should like to leave Killdeer to the Sarpent,

should any thing happen to keep me from doing credit and honour to your precious gift, Judith."

"Leave it to whom you please, Deerslayer; the rifle is your own, to do with as you please; Chingachgook shall have it, should you never return to claim it, if that be your wish."

"Has Hetty been consulted in this matter? Property goes from the parent to the children, and not to one child in partic'lar."

"If you place your right on that of the law, Deerslayer, I fear none of us can claim to be the owner. Thomas Hutter was no more the father of Esther, than he was the father of Judith. Judith and Esther we are, truly, having no other name."

"There may be law in that, but there's no great reason, gal. Accordin' to the custom of families, the goods are your'n, and there's no one here to gainsay it. If Hetty would only say that she is willing, my mind would be quite at ease in the matter. It's true, Judith, that your sister has neither your beauty nor your wit; but we should be the tenderest of the rights and welfare of the most weak-minded."

The girl made no answer; but placing herself at a window, she summoned her sister to her side. When the question was put to Hetty, her simple-minded and affectionate nature cheer-

fully assented to the proposal to confer on Deerslayer a full right of ownership to the much-coveted rifle. The latter now seemed perfectly happy, for the time being at least; and after again examining and re-examining his prize, he expressed a determination to put its merits to a practical test before he left the spot. No boy could have been more eager to exhibit the qualities of his trumpet, or his cross-bow, than this simple forester was to prove those of his rifle. Returning to the platform, he first took the Delaware aside, and informed him that this celebrated piece was to become his property, in the event of any thing serious befalling himself.

"This is a new reason why you should be wary, Sarpent, and not run into any oncalculated danger," the hunter added, "for it will be a victory of itself to a tribe, to own such a piece as this! The Mingos will turn green with envy; and, what is more, they will not ventur' heedlessly near a village where it is known to be kept. So, look well to it, Delaware, and remember that you've now to watch over a thing that has all the valie of a creatur' without its failin's. Hist may be, and should be precious to you, but Killdeer will have the love and veneration of your whole people."

"One rifle like another, Deerslayer," returned the Indian in English, the language used by the other, a little hurt at his friend's lowering his betrothed to the level of a gun. "All kill; all wood and iron. Wife dear to heart; rifle good to shoot."

"And what is a man in the woods without something to shoot with?—a miserable trapper, or a forlorn broom and basket maker at the best. Such a man may hoe corn, and keep soul and body together, but he can never know the savoury morsels of venison, or tell a bear's ham from a hog's. Come, my fri'nd, such another occasion may never offer ag'in, and I feel a strong craving for a trial with this celebrated piece. You shall bring out your own rifle, and I will just sight Killdeer in a careless way, in order that we may know a few of its secret vartues."

As this proposition served to relieve the thoughts of the whole party by giving them a new direction, while it was likely to produce no unpleasant result, every one was willing to enter into it; the girls bringing forth the fire-arms with an alacrity bordering on cheerfulness. Hutter's armory was well supplied, possessing several rifles, all of which were habitually kept loaded, in readiness to meet any sudden demand

for their use. On the present occasion, it only remained to freshen the primings, and each piece was in a state for service. This was soon done, as all assisted in it, the females being as expert in this part of the system of defence, as their male companions.

"Now, Sarpent, we'll begin in an humble way, using old Tom's commoners first, and coming to your we'pon and Killdeer as the winding-up observations," said Deerslayer, delighted to be again weapon in hand, ready to display his skill. "Here's birds in abundance, some in, and some over the lake, and they keep at just a good range, hovering round the hut. Speak your mind, Delaware, and p'int out the creatur' you wish to alarm. Here's a diver nearest in, off to the eastward, and that's a creatur' that buries itself at the flash, and will be like enough to try both piece and powder."

Chingachgook was a man of few words. No sooner was the bird pointed out to him, than he took his aim and fired. The duck dove at the flash, as had been expected, and the bullet skipped harmlessly along the surface of the lake, first striking the water within a few inches of the spot where the bird had so lately swum. Deerslayer laughed, cordially and naturally; but at the same time he threw himself into an

attitude of preparation, and stood keenly watching the sheet of placid water. Presently a dark spot appeared, and then the duck arose to breathe, and shook its wings. While in this act, a bullet passed directly through its breast, actually turning it over lifeless, on its back. At the next moment, Deerslayer stood with the breech of his rifle on the platform, as tranquil as if nothing had happened, though laughing in his own peculiar manner.

"There's no great trial of the pieces in that!" he said, as if anxious to prevent a false impression of his own merit. "No, that proof's neither for, nor ag'in the rifles, seeing it was all quickness of hand and eye. I took the bird at a disadvantage, or he might have got under, again, afore the bullet reached him. But the Sarpent is too wise to mind such tricks, having long been used to them. Do you remember the time, chief, when you thought yourself sartain of the wild goose, and I took him out of your very eyes, as it might be, with a little smoke! Howsever, such things pass for nothing, atween fri'nds, and young folk will have their fun, Judith. Ay, here's just the bird we want, for it's as good for the fire as it is for the aim, and nothing should be lost that can be turned to just account. There, farther north, Delaware."

The latter looked in the required direction, and he soon saw a large black duck, floating in stately repose on the water. At that distant day, when so few men were present to derange the harmony of the wilderness, all the smaller lakes with which the interior of New York so abounds, were places of resort for the migratory aquatic birds; and this sheet, like the others, had once been much frequented by all the varieties of the duck, by the goose, the gull, and the loon. On the appearance of Hutter, the spot was comparatively deserted for other sheets, more retired and remote, though some of each species continued to resort thither, as indeed they do to the present hour. At that instant, a hundred birds were visible from the castle, sleeping on the water, or laving their feathers in the limpid element, though no other offered so favourable a mark as that Deerslayer had just pointed out to his friend. Chingachgook, as usual, spared his words, and proceeded to execution. This time his aim was more careful than before, and his success in proportion. The bird had a wing crippled, and fluttered along the water screaming, materially increasing its distance from its enemies.

"That bird must be put out of pain," exclaimed Deerslayer, the moment the animal endeavoured

to rise on the wing; "and this is the rifle and the eye to do it."

The duck was still floundering along, when the fatal bullet overtook it, severing the head from the neck, as neatly as if it had been done with an axe. Hist had indulged in a low cry of delight, at the success of the young Indian; but now she affected to frown and resent the greater skill of his friend. The chief, on the contrary, uttered the usual exclamation of pleasure, and his smile proved how much he admired, and how little he envied.

"Never mind the gal, Sarpent; never mind Hist's feelin's, which will neither choke, nor drown, slay nor beautify," said Deerslayer, laughing. "'Tis nat'ral for women to enter into their husband's victories and defeats, and you are as good as man and wife, so far as prejudice and fri'ndship go. Here is a bird over head, that will put the pieces to the proof; I challenge you to an upward aim, with a flying target. That's a ra'al proof, and one that needs sartain rifles, as well as sartain eyes."

The species of eagle that frequents the water and lives on fish, was also present, and one was hovering at a considerable height above the hut, greedily watching for an opportunity to make a swoop; its hungry young elevating their heads

from a nest that was in sight in the naked summit of a dead pine. Chingachgook silently turned a new piece against this bird, and after carefully watching his time, fired. A wider circuit than common, denoted that the messenger had passed through the air, at no great distance from the bird, though it missed its object. Deerslayer, whose aim was not more true than it was quick, fired as soon as it was certain his friend had missed, and the deep swoop that followed left it momentarily doubtful whether the eagle was hit or not. The marksman himself, however, proclaimed his own want of success, calling on his friend to seize another rifle, for he saw signs on the part of the bird of an intention to quit the spot.

"I made him wink, Sarpent; I do think his feathers were ruffled, but no blood has yet been drawn, nor is that old piece fit for so nice and quick a sight. Quick, Delaware; you've now a better rifle, and, Judith, bring out Killdeer, for this is the occasion to try his merits, if he has 'em!"

A general movement followed, each of the competitors got ready, and the girls stood in eager expectation of the result. The eagle had made a wide circuit after his low swoop, and fanning his way upward, once more hovered nearly over the hut, at a distance even greater

than before. Chingachgook gazed at him, and then expressed his opinion of the impossibility of striking a bird at that great height, and while he was so nearly perpendicular as to the range. But a low murmur from Hist produced a sudden impulse, and he fired. The result showed how well he had calculated, the eagle not even varying his flight, sailing round and round in his airy circle, and looking down, as if in contempt at his foes.

"Now, Judith," cried Deerslayer, laughing, with glistening and delighted eyes, "we'll see if Killdeer isn't Killeagle, too! Give me room, Sarpent, and watch the reason of the aim, for by reason any thing may be l'arned."

A careful sight followed, and was repeated again and again, the bird continuing to rise higher and higher. Then followed the flash and the report. The swift messenger sped upward, and at the next instant the bird turned on its side, and came swooping down, now struggling with one wing and then with another, sometimes whirling in a circuit, next fanning desperately as if conscious of its injury, until having described several complete circles around the spot, it fell heavily into the end of the ark. On examining the body, it was found that the bullet had pierced it about half way between one of its wings and the breast-bone.

CHAPTER VI.

"Upon two stony tables, spread before her,
She lean'd her bosom, more than stony hard;
There slept th' impartial judge, and strict restorer
Of wrong, or right, with pain or with reward;
There hung the score of all our debts, the card
Where good, and bad, and life, and death, were painted;
Was never heart of mortal so untainted,
But when the roll was read, with thousand terrors fainted."

GILES FLETCHER.

"WE'VE done an unthoughtful thing, Sarpent —yes, Judith, we've done an unthoughtful thing in taking life with an object no better than vanity!" exclaimed Deerslayer, when the Delaware held up the enormous bird by its wings, and exhibited the dying eyes riveted on its enemies with the gaze that the helpless ever fasten on their destroyers. "'T was more becomin' two boys to gratify the irfeelin's in this onthoughtful manner, than two warriors on a war-path, even though it be their first. Ah's! me; well, as a punishment I'll quit you at once, and when I find myself alone with them bloody-minded Mingos,

it's more than like I'll have occasion to remember that life is sweet, even to the beasts of the woods and the fowls of the air. Here, Judith; there's Killdeer; take him back ag'in, and keep him for some hand that's more desarving to own such a piece."

"I know of none as deserving as your own, Deerslayer," answered the girl in haste; "none but yours shall keep the rifle."

"If it depended on skill you might be right enough, gal, but we should know *when* to use fire-arms, as well as *how* to use 'em. I haven't l'arnt the first duty yet, it seems; so keep the piece till I have. The sight of a dyin' and distressed creatur', even though it be only a bird, brings wholesome thoughts to a man who don't know how soon his own time may come, and who *is* pretty sartain that it will come afore the sun sets; I 'd give back all my vain feelin's, and rej'icin's in hand and eye, if that poor eagle was only on its nest ag'in with its young, praisin' the Lord, for any thing that we can know about the matter, for health and strength!"

The listeners were confounded with this proof of sudden repentance in the hunter, and that, too, for an indulgence so very common, that men seldom stop to weigh its consequences, or the physical suffering it may bring on the offending

and helpless. The Delaware understood what was said, though he scarce understood the feelings which had prompted the words, and by way of disposing of the difficulty, he drew his keen knife, and severed the head of the sufferer from its body.

"What a thing is power!" continued the hunter, "and what a thing it is to have it, and not to know how to use it! It's no wonder, Judith, that the great so often fail of their duties when even the little and the humble find it so hard to do what 's right, and not to do what 's wrong. Then, how one evil act brings others after it! Now, wasn't it for this furlough of mine, which must soon take me back to the Mingos, I 'd find this creatur's nest, if I travelled the woods a fortnight —though an eagle's nest is soon found by them that understands the bird's natur'—but I 'd travel a fortnight rather than not find it, just to put the young, too, out of their pain."

"I 'm glad to hear you say this, Deerslayer," observed Hetty, "and God will be more apt to remember your sorrow for what you 've done, than the wickedness itself. I thought how wicked it was to kill harmless birds, while you were shooting, and meant to tell you so; but I don't know how it happened—I was so curious to see if you *could* hit an eagle at so great a height, that I

forgot altogether to speak, till the mischief was done."

"That 's it; that 's just it, my good Hetty. We can all see our faults and mistakes when it's too late to help them! Howsever, I 'm glad you did'nt speak, for I don't think a word or two would have stopped me, just at that moment; and so the sin stands in its nakedness, and not aggravated by any unheeded calls to forbear. Well, well, bitter thoughts are hard to be borne at all times, but there 's times when they're harder than at others."

Little did Deerslayer know, while thus indulging in feelings that were natural to the man, and so strictly in accordance with his own unsophisticated and just principles, that, in the course of the inscrutable Providence, which so uniformly and yet so mysteriously covers all events with its mantle, the very fault he was disposed so severely to censure, was to be made the means of determining his own earthly fate. The mode and the moment in which he was to feel the influence of this interference, it would be premature to relate, but both will appear in the course of the succeeding chapters. As for the young man, he now slowly left the ark, like one sorrowing for his misdeeds, and seated himself in silence on the platform. By this time the sun had ascended to

some height, and its appearance, taken in connection with his present feelings, induced him to prepare to depart. The Delaware got the canoe ready for his friend, as soon as apprised of his intention, while Hist busied herself in making the few arrangements that were thought necessary to his comfort. All this was done without ostentation, but in a way that left Deerslayer fully acquainted with, and equally disposed to appreciate, the motive. When all was ready, both returned to the side of Judith and Hetty—neither of whom had moved from the spot where the young hunter sat.

"The best fri'nds must often part," the last began, when he saw the whole party grouped around him. "Yes, fri'ndship can't alter the ways of Providence; and let our feelin's be as they may, we must part. I've often thought there's moments when our words dwell longer on the mind than common, and when advice is remembered, just because the mouth that gives it isn't likely to give it ag'in. No one knows what will happen in the world; and therefore it may be well, when fri'nds separate under a likelihood that the parting may be long, to say a few words in kindness as a sort of keepsakes. If all but one will go into the ark, I'll talk to each in turn, and what is more, I'll listen to what you

may have to say back ag'in; for it's a poor counsellor that won't take as well as give."

As the meaning of the speaker was understood, the two Indians immediately withdrew as desired, leaving the sisters, however, still standing at the young man's side. A look of Deerslayer's induced Judith to explain.

"You can advise Hetty as you land," she said hastily; "I intend that she shall accompany you to the shore."

"Is this wise, Judith? It 's true that, under common sarcumstances, a feeble mind is a great protection among red-skins; but when their feelin's are up, and they 're bent on revenge, it 's hard to say what may come to pass. Besides—"

"What were you about to say, Deerslayer?" asked Judith, whose gentleness of voice and manner amounted nearly to tenderness, though she struggled hard to keep her emotions and apprehensions in subjection.

"Why, simply that there are sights and doin's that one even as little gifted with reason and memory as Hetty, here, might better not witness. So, Judith, you would do well to let me land alone, and to keep your sister back."

"Never fear for me, Deerslayer," put in Hetty, who comprehended enough of the discourse to know its general drift; "I 'm feeble-minded, and

that, they say, is an excuse for going anywhere; and what that won't excuse will be overlooked, on account of the Bible I always carry. It is wonderful, Judith, how all sorts of men, the trappers as well as the hunters, red men as well as white, Mingos as well as Delawares, do reverence and fear the Bible!"

"I think you have not the least ground to fear any injury, Hetty," answered the sister, "and therefore I shall insist on your going to the Huron camp with our friend. Your being there can do no harm, not even to yourself, and may do great good to Deerslayer."

"This is not a moment, Judith, to dispute; and so have the matter your own way," returned the young man. "Get yourself ready, Hetty, and go into the canoe, for I 've a few parting words to say to your sister, which can do you no good."

Judith and her companion continued silent until Hetty had so far complied as to leave them alone, when Deerslayer took up the subject as if it had been interrupted by some ordinary occurrence, and in a very matter-of-fact way.

"Words spoken at parting, and which may be the last we ever hear from a fri'nd, are not soon forgotten," he repeated, "and so, Judith, I intend to speak to you like a brother, seein' I 'm

not old enough to be your father. In the first place, I wish to caution you ag'in your inemies, of which two may be said to ha'nt your very footsteps, and to beset your ways. The first is oncommon good looks, which is as dangerous a foe to some young women as a whole tribe of Mingos could prove, and which calls for great watchfulness; not to admire and praise; but to distrust and sarcumvent. Yes, good looks may be sarcumvented, and fairly outwitted, too. In order to do this, you 've only to remember that they melt like the snows; and, when once gone, they never come back ag'in. The seasons come and go, Judith; and if we have winter, with storms and frosts; and spring, with chills and leafless trees; we have summer, with its sun and glorious skies; and fall, with its fruits, and a garment thrown over the forest that no beauty of the town could rummage out of all the shops in America. 'Arth is in an eternal round, the goodness of God bringing back the pleasant when we 've had enough of the onpleasant. But it 's not so with good looks. *They* are lent for a short time in youth, to be used and not abused; and, as I never met with a young woman to whom Providence has been as bountiful as it has to you, Judith, in this partic'lar, I warn you, as it might be with my dyin' breath, to beware

of the inimy; fri'nd or inimy, as we deal with the gift."

It was so grateful to Judith to hear these unequivocal admissions of her personal charms, that much would have been forgiven to the man who made them, let him be who he might. But, at that moment, and from a far better feeling, it would not have been easy for Deerslayer seriously to offend her; and she listened with a patience which, had it been foretold only a week earlier, it would have excited her indignation to hear.

"I understand your meaning, Deerslayer," returned the girl, with a meekness and humility that a little surprised her listener, "and hope to be able to profit by it. But you have mentioned only one of the enemies I have to fear; who, or what, is the other?"

"The other is givin' way afore your own good sense and judgment, I find, Judith; yes, he's not as dangerous as I supposed. Howsever, havin' opened the subject, it will be as well to end it honestly. The first inimy you have to be watchful of, as I've already told you, Judith, is oncommon good looks, and the next is an oncommon knowledge of the sarcumstance. If the first is bad, the last doesn't, in any way, mend the matter, so far as safety and peace of mind are consarned."

How much longer the young man would have gone on in his simple and unsuspecting, but well-intentioned manner, it might not be easy to say, had he not been interrupted by his listener's bursting into tears, and giving way to an outbreak of feeling which was so much the more violent from the fact that it had been with so much difficulty suppressed. At first her sobs were so violent and uncontrollable that Deerslayer was a little appalled, and he was abundantly repentant from the instant that he discovered how much greater was the effect produced by his words than he had anticipated. Even the austere and exacting are usually appeased by the signs of contrition, but the nature of Deerslayer did not require proofs of intense feeling so strong, in order to bring him down to a level with the regrets felt by the girl herself. He arose as if an adder had stung him, and the accents of the mother that soothes her child were scarcely more gentle and winning than the tones of his voice, as he now expressed his contrition at having gone so far.

"It was well meant, Judith," he said, "but it was not intended to hurt your feelin's so much. I have overdone the advice, I see; yes, I've overdone it, and I crave your pardon for the same. Fri'ndship's an awful thing! Sometimes

it chides us for not havin' done enough; and then ag'in it speaks in strong words for havin' done too much. Howsever, I acknowledge I've overdone the matter, and as I've a ra'al and strong regard for you, I rej'ice to say it, inasmuch as it proves how much better you are than my own vanity and consaits had made you out to be."

Judith now removed her hands from her face, her tears had ceased, and she unveiled a countenance so winning, with the smile which rendered it even radiant, that the young man gazed at her, for a moment, with speechless delight.

"Say no more, Deerslayer," she hastily interposed, "it pains me to hear you find fault with yourself. I know my own weakness all the better, now I see that you have discovered it; the lesson, bitter as I have found it for a moment, shall not be forgotten. We will not talk any longer of these things, for I do not feel myself brave enough for the undertaking, and I should not like the Delawares, or Hist, or even Hetty, to notice my weakness. Farewell, Deerslayer, may God bless and protect you as your honest heart deserves blessing and protection, and as I must think he will."

Judith had so far regained the superiority that properly belonged to her better education, high spirit, and surpassing personal advantages, as to preserve the ascendency she had thus accidentally

obtained, and effectually prevented any return to the subject that was as singularly interrupted as it had been singularly introduced. The young man permitted her to have every thing her own way, and when she pressed his hard hand in both her own, he made no resistance, but submitted to the homage as quietly, and with quite as matter of course a manner, as a sovereign would have received a similar tribute from a subject, or the mistress from her suitor. Feeling had flushed the face and illuminated the whole countenance of the girl, and her beauty was never more resplendent than when she cast a parting glance at the youth. That glance was filled with anxiety, interest, and gentle pity. At the next instant she darted into the hut and was seen no more; though she spoke to Hist from a window, to inform her that their friend expected her appearance.

"You know enough of red-skin natur', and red-skin usages, Wah-ta!-Wah, to see the condition I am in on account of this furlough," commenced the hunter, in Delaware, as soon as the patient and submissive girl of that people had moved quietly to his side; "you will therefore best understand how onlikely I am ever to talk with you ag'in. I've but little to say; but that little comes from long living among your people,

and from having obsarved and noted their usages. The life of a woman is hard at the best, but, I must own, though I'm not opinionated in favour of my own colour, that it is harder among the red-men than it is among the pale-faces. This is a pi'nt on which Christians may well boast, if boasting can be set down for Christianity in any manner or form, which I rather think it cannot. Howsever, all women have their trials. Red women have their'n in what I should call the nat'ral way, while white women take 'em inoculated like. Bear your burthen, Hist, becomingly, and remember, if it be a little toilsome, how much lighter it is than that of most Indian women. I know the Sarpent well—what I call cordially—and he will never be a tyrant to any thing he loves, though he will expect to be treated himself like a Mohican chief. There will be cloudy days in your lodge, I suppose, for they happen under all usages, and among all people; but, by keeping the windows of the heart open, there will always be room for the sunshine to enter. You come of a great stock yourself, and so does Chingachgook. It's not very likely that either will ever forget the sarcumstance, and do any thing to disgrace your forefathers. Nevertheless, liking is a tender plant, and never thrives long when watered with tears. Let the 'arth around your married

happiness be moistened by the dews of kindness."

"My pale brother is very wise; Wah will keep in her mind all that his wisdom tells her."

"That's judicious and womanly, Hist. Care in listening, and stout-heartedness in holding to good counsel, is a wife's great protection. And now ask the Sarpent to come and speak with me, for a moment, and carry away with you all my best wishes and prayers. I shall think of you, Hist, and of your intended husband, let what may come to pass, and always wish you well here and hereafter, whether the last is to be according to Indian idees, or Christian doctrines."

Hist shed no tear at parting. She was sustained by the high resolution of one who had decided on her course; but her dark eyes were luminous with the feelings that glowed within, and her pretty countenance beamed with an expression of determination that was in marked and singular contrast to its ordinary gentleness. It was but a minute ere the Delaware advanced to the side of his friend with the light, noiseless tread of an Indian.

"Come this-a-way, Sarpent, here more out of sight of the woman," commenced the Deerslayer, "for I've several things to say that mustn't so much as be suspected, much less overheard. *You*

know too well the natur' of furloughs and Mingos to have any doubts or misgivings consarning what is likely to happen, when I get back to the camp. On them two p'ints, therefore, a few words will go a great way. In the first place, chief, I wish to say a little about Hist, and the manner in which you red men treat your wives. I suppose it's according to the gifts of your people that the women should work, and the men hunt; but there's such a thing as moderation in all matters. As for hunting, I see no good reason why any limits need be set to *that*, but Hist comes of too good a stock to toil like a common drudge. One of your means and standin' need never want for corn, or potatoes, or any thing that the fields yield; therefore, I hope the hoe will never be put into the hands of any wife of your'n. You know I am not quite a beggar, and all I own, whether in ammunition, skins, arms, or calicoes, I give to Hist, should I not come back to claim them by the end of the season. This will set the maiden up, and will buy labour for her, for a long time to come. I suppose I needn't tell you to love the young woman, for that you do already, and whomsoever the man ra'ally loves, he'll be likely enough to cherish. Nevertheless, it can do no harm to say that kind words never rankle, while bitter words do. I know you're a man, Sarpent, that

is less apt to talk in his own lodge, than to speak at the council fire; but forgetful moments may overtake us all, and the practyce of kind doin' and kind talkin' is a wonderful advantage in keepin' peace in a cabin, as well as on a hunt."

"My ears are open," returned the Delaware, gravely; "the words of my brother have entered so far that they never can fall out again. They are like rings, that have no end, and cannot drop. Let him speak on; the song of the wren and the voice of a friend never tire."

"I will speak a little longer, chief, but you will excuse it for the sake of old companionship, should I now talk about myself. If the worst comes to the worst, it's not likely there'll be much left of me but ashes; so a grave would be useless, and a sort of vanity. On that score I'm no way partic'lar, though it might be well enough to take a look at the remains of the pile, and should any bones or pieces be found, 'twould be more decent to gather them together and bury them, than to let them lie for the wolves to gnaw at and howl over. These matters can make no great difference in the end, but men of white blood and Christian feelin's have rather a gift for graves."

"It shall be done as my brother says," returned the Indian, gravely. "If his mind is full, let him empty it in the bosom of a friend."

"Thank you, Sarpent; my mind's easy enough; yes, it's tolerable easy. Idees will come uppermost that I'm not apt to think about in common, it's true; but by strivin' ag'in some, and lettin' others come out, all will be right in the long run. There's one thing, however, chief, that *does* seem to me to be *on*reasonable, and ag'in natur', though the missionaries say it's true; and bein' of my religion and colour, I feel bound to believe them. They say an Indian may torment and tortur' the body to the heart's content, and scalp and cut, and tear and burn, and consume all his inventions and deviltries, until nothin' is left but ashes, and they shall be scattered to the four winds of heaven, yet, when the trumpet of God shall sound, all will come together ag'in, and the man will stand forth in his flesh, the same creatur' as to looks, if not as to feelin's, that he was afore he was harmed!"

"The missionaries are good men; they mean well," returned the Delaware, courteously; "they are not great medicines. They think all they say, Deerslayer; that is no reason why warriors and orators should be all ears. When Chingachgook shall see the father of Tamenund standing in his scalp and paint, and war-lock, then will he believe the missionaries."

"Seein' *is* believin' of a sartainty.—Ah's me! and some of us may see these things sooner than

we thought. I comprehend your meanin' about Tamenund's father, Sarpent, and the idee's a close idee. Tamenund is now an elderly man, say eighty, every day of it; and his father was scalped and tormented, and burnt, when the present prophet was a youngster. Yes, if one could see *that* come to pass, there wouldn't be much difficulty in yieldin' faith to all that the missionaries say. Howsever, I am not ag'in the opinion now; for you must know, Sarpent, that the great principle of Christianity is to believe *without* seeing; and a man should always act up to his religion and principles, let them be what they may."

"That is strange for a wise nation," said the Delaware, with emphasis. "The red man looks hard, that he may *see* and understand."

"Yes, that's plauserble, and is agreeable to mortal pride; but it's not as deep as it seems. If we could understand *all* we see, Sarpent, there might be not only sense but safety in refusin' to give faith to any *one* thing that we might find oncomprehensible; but when there's so many things, about which it may be said we know nothin' at all, why there's little use, and no reason in bein' difficult touchin' any one in partic'lar. For my part, Delaware, all my thoughts haven't been on the game, when outlyin' in the hunts and scoutins of our youth. Many's the hour I've

passed pleasantly enough too, in what is tarmed conterplation by my people. On such occasions the mind is actyve, though the body seems lazy and listless. An open spot on a mountain side, where a wide look can be had at the heavens and the 'arth, is a most judicious place for a man to get a just idee of the power of the Manitou, and of his own littleness. At such times, there isn't any great disposition to find fault with little difficulties in the way of comperhension, as there are so many big ones to hide them. Believin' comes easy enough to me at such times; and, if the Lord made man first out of 'arth, as they tell me it is written in the Bible, then turns him into dust at death, I see no great difficulty in the way to bringin' him back in the body, though ashes be the only substance left. These things lie beyond our understandin', though they may, and do lie so close to our feelin's. But of all the doctrines, Sarpent, that which disturbs me, and disconsarts my mind the most, is the one which teaches us to think that a pale-face goes to one heaven, and a red-skin to another; it may separate in death them which lived much together, and loved each other well in life!"

"Do the missionaries teach their white brethren to think it is so?" demanded the Indian, with serious earnestness. "The Delawares believe that

good men and brave warriors will hunt together in the same pleasant woods, let them belong to whatever tribe they may; that all the unjust Indians and cowards will have to sneak in with the dogs and the wolves to get venison for their lodges."

"'Tis wonderful how many consaits mankind have consarnin' happiness and misery hereafter!" exclaimed the hunter, borne away by the power of his own thoughts. "Some believe in burnin's and flames, and some think punishment is to eat with the wolves and dogs. Then, ag'in, some fancy heaven to be only the carryin' out of their own 'arthly longin's; while others fancy it all gold and shinin' lights! Well, I've an idee of my own in that matter, which is just this, Sarpent. Whenever I've done wrong, I've ginerally found 'twas owin' to some blindness of the mind which hid the right from view, and when sight has returned, then has come sorrow and repentance. Now, I consait that, after death, when the body is laid aside, or, if used at all, is purified and without its longin's, the spirit sees all things in their ra'al light, and never becomes blind to truth and justice. Such bein' the case, all that has been done in life is beheld as plainly as the sun is seen at noon; the good brings joy, while the evil brings sorrow. There's nothin' onreasonable in that, but it's agreeable to every man's exper'ence."

"I thought the pale-faces believed *all* men were wicked; who then could ever find the white man's heaven?"

"That's ingen'ous, but it falls short of the missionary teachin's. You'll be christianized one day, I make no doubt, and then 'twill all come plain enough. You must know, Sarpent, that there's been a great deed of salvation done, that, by God's help, enables all men to find a pardon for their wickednesses, and *that* is the essence of the white man's religion. I can't stop to talk this matter over with you any longer, for Hetty's in the canoe, and the furlough takes me away; but the time will come I hope, when you'll *feel* these things; for after all they must be *felt*, rather than reasoned about. Ah's! me; well, Delaware, there's my hand; you know it's that of a fri'nd, and will shake it as such, though it never has done you one-half the good its owner wishes it had."

The Indian took the offered hand, and returned its pressure warmly. Then falling back on his acquired stoicism of manner, which so many mistake for constitutional indifference, he drew up in reserve, and prepared to part from his friend with dignity. Deerslayer, however, was more natural; nor would he have at all cared about giving way to his feelings, had not the recent conduct and language of Judith given him some secret, though

ill-defined apprehensions of a scene. He was too humble to imagine the truth concerning the actual feelings of that beautiful girl, while he was too observant not to have noted the struggle she had maintained with herself, and which had so often led her to the very verge of discovery. That something extraordinary was concealed in her breast, he thought obvious enough; and, through a sentiment of manly delicacy that would have done credit to the highest human refinement, he shrunk from any exposure of her secret that might subsequently cause regret to the girl herself. He, therefore, determined to depart now, and that without any further manifestations of feeling either from himself or from others.

"God bless you! Sarpent—God bless you!" cried the hunter, as the canoe left the side of the platform. "Your Manitou and my God, only know when and where we shall meet ag'in; I shall count it a great blessing, and a full reward for any little good I may have done on 'arth, if we shall be permitted to know each other, and to consort together hereafter, as we have so long done in these pleasant woods afore us!"

Chingachgook waved his hand. Drawing the light blanket he wore over his head, as a Roman would conceal his grief in his robes, he slowly withdrew into the ark, in order to indulge his sor-

row and his musings alone. Deerslayer did not speak again until the canoe was half-way to the shore. Then he suddenly ceased paddling, at an interruption that came from the mild, musical voice of Hetty.

"Why do *you* go back to the Hurons, Deerslayer?" demanded the girl. "They say *I* am feeble-minded, and such they never harm; but you have as much sense as Hurry Harry, and more too, Judith thinks, though I don't see how that can well be."

"Ah! Hetty afore we land I must convarse a little with you, child; and that too, on matters touching your own welfare principally. Stop paddling—or rather, that the Mingos needn't think we are plotting and contriving, and so treat us accordingly, just dip your paddle lightly, and give the canoe a little motion and no more. That's just the idee and the movement; I see you're ready enough at an appearance, and might be made useful in a sarcumvention, if it was lawful now to use one—that's just the idee and the movement! Ah's me! Desait and a false tongue are evil things, and altogether onbecoming our colour, Hetty; but it *is* a pleasure and a satisfaction to outdo the contrivances of a red-skin, in the strife of lawful warfare. My path has been short, and is like soon to have an end; but I

can see that the wanderings of a warrior aren't altogether among brambles and difficulties. There's a bright side to a war-path, as well as to most other things, if we'll only have the wisdom to see it, and the ginerosity to own it."

"And why should your war-path, as you call it, come so near to an end, Deerslayer?"

"Because, my good girl, my furlough comes so near to an end. They're likely to have pretty much the same tarmination as regards time—one following on the heels of the other as a matter of course."

"I don't understand your meaning, Deerslayer," returned the girl, looking a little bewildered. "Mother always said people ought to speak more plainly to me than to most other persons, because I'm feeble-minded. Those that are feeble-minded, don't understand as easily as those that have sense."

"Well then, Hetty, the simple truth is this. You know that I'm now a captyve to the Hurons, and captyves can't do in all things as they please——"

"But how can you be a captive," eagerly interrupted the girl, "when you are out here on the lake in father's bark canoe, and the Indians are in the woods with no canoe at all? *That* can't be true, Deerslayer!"

"I wish with all my heart and soul, Hetty, that you was right and that I was wrong, instead of your bein' all wrong, and my bein' only too near the truth. Free as I seem to your eyes, gal, I'm bound hand and foot, in ra'ality."

"Well it *is* a great misfortune not to have sense! Now I can't see or understand that you are a captive or bound in any manner. If you are bound, with what are your hands and feet fastened?"

"With a furlough, gal; that's a thong that binds tighter than any chain. One *may* be broken, but the other can't. Ropes and chains allow of knives, and desait, and contrivances; but a furlough can neither be cut, slipped, nor sarcumvented."

"What sort of a thing is a furlough then, if it be stronger than hemp or iron? I never saw a furlough."

"I hope you may never feel one, gal; the tie is altogether in the feelin's in these matters, and therefore is to be felt and not seen. You can understand what it is to give a promise, I dare say, good little Hetty?"

"Certainly. A promise is to say you will do a thing, and that binds you to be as good as your word. Mother always kept her promises to me, and then she said it would be wicked if I didn't

keep my promises to her, and to every body else."

"You have had a good mother in some matters, child, whatever she may have been in other some. That is a promise, and as you say, it must be kept. Now, I fell into the hands of the Mingos last night, and they let me come off to see my fri'nds and send messages in to my own colour, if any such feel consarn on my account, on condition that I shall be back when the sun is up today, and take whatever their revenge and hatred can contrive in the way of torments in satisfaction for the life of a warrior that fell by my rifle, as well as for that of the young woman shot by Hurry, and other disapp'intments met with on and about this lake. What is called a promise atween a mother and darter, or even atween strangers in the settlements is called a furlough, when given by one soldier to another on a war-path. And now I suppose you understand my situation, Hetty?"

The girl made no answer for some time, but she ceased paddling altogether, as if the novel idea distracted her mind too much to admit of other employment. Then she resumed the dialogue earnestly and with solicitude.

"Do you think the Hurons will have the heart to do what you say, Deerslayer?" she asked. "I have found them kind and harmless."

"That's true enough as consarns one like you, Hetty; but it's a very different affair when it comes to an open inimy, and he too the owner of a pretty sartain rifle. I don't say that they bear me special malice on account of any expl'ites already performed, for that would be bragging, as it might be, on the varge of the grave; but it's no vanity to believe that they know one of their bravest and cunnin'est chiefs fell by my hands. Such bein' the case, the tribe would reproach them if they failed to send the spirit of a pale-face to keep the company of the spirit of their red brother; always supposin' that he can catch it. I look for no marcy, Hetty, at their hands; and my principal sorrow is, that such a calamity should befal me on my first war-path: that it would come sooner or later, every soldier counts on and expects."

"The Hurons *shall not* harm you, Deerslayer," cried the girl, much excited. "'Tis wicked as well as cruel; I have the Bible here to tell them so. Do you think I would stand by and see you tormented?"

"I hope not, my good Hetty, I hope not; and therefore when the moment comes, I expect you will move off, and not be a witness of what you can't help, while it would grieve you. But I haven't stopped the paddles to talk of my own afflictions and difficulties, but to speak a little

plainly to you, gal, consarnin' your own matters."

"What can you have to say to me, Deerslayer! Since mother died, few talk to me of such things."

"So much the worse, poor gal; yes, 'tis so much the worse, for one of your state of mind needs frequent talking to, in order to escape the snares and desaits of this wicked world. You haven't forgotten Hurry Harry, gal, so soon I calculate?"

"I!—I forget Henry March!" exclaimed Hetty, starting. "Why should I forget him, Deerslayer, when he is our friend, and only left us last night. Then the large bright star that mother loved so much to gaze at, was just over the top of yonder tall pine on the mountain as Hurry got into the canoe; and when you landed him on the point near the east bay, it wasn't more than the length of Judith's handsomest riband above it."

"And how can you know how long I was gone, or how far I went to land Hurry, seein' you were not with us, and the distance was so great to say nothing of the night?"

"Oh! I knew when it was, well enough," returned Hetty, positively. "There's more ways than one for counting time and distance. When the mind is engaged it is better than any clock.

Mine is feeble, I know, but it goes true enough in all that touches poor Hurry Harry. Judith will never marry March, Deerslayer."

"That's the p'int, Hetty; that's the very p'int I want to come to. I suppose you know, that it's nat'ral for young people to have kind feelin's for one another, more especially when one happens to be a youth and t'other a maiden. Now, one of your years and mind, gal, that has neither father nor mother, and who lives in a wilderness frequented by hunters and trappers, needs be on her guard against evils she little dreams of."

"What harm can it be to think well of a fellow-creature," returned Hetty, simply, though the conscious blood was stealing to her cheeks in spite of a spirit so pure that it scarce knew why it prompted the blush; "the Bible tells us to love them who despitefully use us, and why shouldn't we like them that do not?"

"Ah! Hetty, the love of the missionaries isn't the sort of likin' I mean. Answer me one thing, child; do you believe yourself to have mind enough to become a wife and a mother?"

"That's not a proper question to ask a young woman, Deerslayer, and I'll not answer it," returned the girl, in a reproving manner—much as a parent rebukes a child for an act of indiscretion. "If you have any thing to say about Hurry, I'll

hear *that*—but you must not speak evil of him; he is absent, and 'tis unkind to talk evil of the absent."

"Your mother has given you so many good lessons, Hetty, that my fears for you are not as great as they were. Nevertheless, a young woman without parents in your state of mind, and who is not without beauty, must always be in danger in such a lawless region as this. I would say nothin' amiss of Hurry, who, in the main, is not a bad man for one of his callin', but you ought to know one thing, which it may not be altogether pleasant to tell you, but which must be said. March has a desperate likin' for your sister Judith."

"Well, what of that? Everybody admires Judith, she's so handsome, and Hurry has told me again and again how much he wishes to marry her. But that will never come to pass, for Judith don't like Hurry. She likes another, and talks about him in her sleep; though you need not ask me who he is, for all the gold in King George's crown, and all the jewels too, wouldn't tempt me to tell you his name. If sisters can't keep each other's secrets, who can?"

"Sartainly; I do not wish you to tell me, Hetty, nor would it be any advantage to a dyin' man to know. What the tongue says when the mind's

asleep, neither head nor heart is answerable for."

"I wish I knew why Judith talks so much in her sleep about officers and honest hearts, and false tongues; but I suppose she don't like to tell me, as I'm feeble-minded. Isn't it odd, Deerslayer, that Judith don't like Hurry—he who is the bravest-looking youth that ever comes upon the lake, and is as handsome as she is herself. Father always said they would be the comeliest couple in the country, though mother didn't fancy March any more than Judith. There's no telling what will happen, they say, until things actually come to pass."

"Ah's! me—well, poor Hetty, 'tis of no great use to talk to them that can't understand you, and so I'll say no more about what I did wish to speak of, though it lay heavy on my mind. Put the paddle in motion ag'in, gal, and we'll push for the shore, for the sun is nearly up, and my furlough is almost out."

The canoe now glided ahead, holding its way towards the point where Deerslayer well knew that his enemies expected him, and where he now began to be afraid, he might not arrive in season to redeem his plighted faith. Hetty, perceiving his impatience without very clearly comprehending its cause, however, seconded his ef-

forts in a way that soon rendered their timely return no longer a matter of doubt. Then, and then only, did the young man suffer his exertions to flag, and Hetty began again to prattle in her simple confiding manner, though nothing farther was uttered that it may be thought necessary to relate.

CHAPTER VII.

"Thou hast been busy, Death, this day, and yet
But half thy work is done! The gates of hell
Are thronged, yet twice ten thousand spirits move,
Who, from their warm and healthful tenements,
Fear no divorce, must, ere the sun go down,
Enter the world of woe!"——

SOUTHEY.

One experienced in the signs of the heavens, would have seen that the sun wanted but two or three minutes of the zenith, when Deerslayer landed on the point where the Hurons were now encamped, nearly abreast of the castle. This spot was similar to the one already described, with the exception that the surface of the land was less broken and less crowded with trees. Owing to these two circumstances it was all the better suited to the purpose for which it had been selected, the space beneath the branches bearing some resemblance to a densely wooded lawn. Favoured by its position and its spring, it had been much resorted to by savages and hunters, and the

natural grasses had succeeded their fires, leaving an appearance of sward in places, a very unusual accompaniment of the virgin forest. Nor was the margin of water fringed with bushes, as on so much of its shore, but the eye penetrated the woods immediately on reaching the strand, commanding nearly the whole area of the projection.

If it was a point of honour with the Indian warrior to redeem his word, when pledged to return and meet his death at a given hour, so was it a point of characteristic pride to show no womanish impatience, but to re-appear as nearly as possible at the appointed moment. It was well not to exceed the grace accorded by the generosity of the enemy, but it was better to meet it to a minute. Something of this dramatic effect mingles with most of the graver usages of the American aborigines, and no doubt, like the prevalence of a similar feeling among people more sophisticated and refined, may be referred to a principle of nature. We all love the wonderful, and when it comes attended by chivalrous self-devotion and a rigid regard to honour, it presents itself to our admiration in a shape doubly attractive. As respects Deerslayer, though he took a pride in showing his white blood, by often deviating from the usages of the red-men, he frequently dropped into their customs, and oftener

into their feelings, unconsciously to himself, in consequence of having no other arbiters to appeal to than their judgments and tastes. On the present occasion, he would have abstained from betraying a feverish haste by a too speedy return, since it would have contained a tacit admission that the time asked for was more than had been wanted; but, on the other hand, had the idea occurred to him, he would have quickened his movements a little, in order to avoid the dramatic appearance of returning at the precise instant set as the utmost limit of his absence. Still, accident had interfered to defeat the last intention, for when the young man put his foot on the point, and advanced with a steady tread towards the group of chiefs that was seated in grave array on a fallen tree, the oldest of their number cast his eye upward at an opening in the trees, and pointed out to his companions the startling fact that the sun was just entering a space that was known to mark the zenith. A common, but low exclamation of surprise and admiration escaped every mouth, and the grim warriors looked at each other; some with envy and disappointment, some with astonishment, at the precise accuracy of their victim, and others with a more generous and liberal feeling. The American Indian always deemed his moral victories the noblest, prizing

the groans and yielding of his victim under torture more than the trophy of his scalp; and the trophy itself more than his life. To slay, and not to bring off the proof of victory, indeed, was scarcely deemed honourable; even these rude and fierce tenants of the forest, like their more nurtured brethren of the court and the camp, having set up for themselves imaginary and arbitrary points of honour, to supplant the conclusions of the right, and the decisions of reason.

The Hurons had been divided in their opinions concerning the probability of their captive's return. Most among them, indeed, had not expected it possible for a pale-face to come back voluntarily and meet the known penalties of an Indian torture; but a few of the seniors expected better things from one who had already shown himself so singularly cool, brave, and upright. The party had come to its decision, however, less in the expectation of finding the pledge redeemed, than in the hope of disgracing the Delawares by casting into their teeth the delinquency of one bred in their villages. They would have greatly preferred that Chingachgook should be their prisoner, and prove the traitor; but the pale-face scion of the hated stock was no bad substitute, for their purposes, failing in their designs against the ancient stem. With a view to render the triumph as

signal as possible, in the event of the hour's passing without the re-appearance of the hunter, all the warriors and scouts of the party had been called in; and the whole band, men, women, and children, was now assembled at this single point to be a witness of the expected scene. As the castle was in plain view, and by no means distant, it was easily watched by day-light; and it being thought that its inmates were now limited to Hurry, the Delaware, and the two girls, no apprehensions were felt of their being able to escape unseen. A large raft, having a breast-work of logs, had been prepared, and was in actual readiness to be used against either ark or castle, as occasion might require, so soon as the fate of Deerslayer was determined; the seniors of the party having come to the opinion that it was getting to be hazardous to delay their departure for Canada, beyond the coming night. In short, the band waited merely to dispose of this single affair, ere it brought matters to a crisis, and prepared to commence its retreat towards the distant waters of Ontario.

It was an imposing scene, into which Deerslayer now found himself advancing. All the older warriors were seated on the trunk of the fallen tree, waiting his approach with grave decorum. On the right stood the young men,

armed, while the left was occupied by the women and children. In the centre was an open space of considerable extent, always canopied by leaves, but from which the underbrush, dead wood, and other obstacles had been carefully removed. The more open area had probably been much used by former parties, for this was the place where the appearance of a sward was the most decided. The arches of the woods, even at high noon, cast their sombre shadows on the spot, which the brilliant rays of the sun that struggled through the leaves contributed to mellow, and, if such an expression can be used, to illuminate. It was probably from a similar scene that the mind of man first got its idea of the effects of Gothic tracery and churchly hues; this temple of nature producing some such effect, so far as light and shadows were concerned, as the well-known offspring of human invention.

As was not unusual among the tribes and wandering bands of the aborigines, two chiefs shared, in nearly equal degrees, the principal and primitive authority that was wielded over these children of the forest. There were several who might claim the distinction of being chief men, but the two in question were so much superior to all the rest in influence, that, when they agreed, no one disputed their mandates; and when they were divided, the band hesitated, like men who had

lost their governing principle of action. It was also in conformity with practice—perhaps we might add, in conformity with nature, that one of the chiefs was indebted to his mind for his influence, whereas the other owed his distinction altogether to qualities that were physical. One was a senior, well known for eloquence in debate, wisdom in council, and prudence in measures; while his great competitor, if not his rival, was a brave distinguished in war, notorious for ferocity, and remarkable in the way of intellect, for nothing but the cunning and expedients of the war-path. The first was Rivenoak, who has already been introduced to the reader, while the last was called le Panthère, in the language of the Canadas; or the Panther, to resort to the vernacular of the English colonies. The appellation of the fighting chief was supposed to indicate the qualities of the warrior, agreeably to a practice of the red man's nomenclature; ferocity, cunning, and treachery, being, perhaps, the distinctive features of his character. The title had been received from the French, and was prized so much the more from that circumstance, the Indian submitting profoundly to the greater intelligence of his pale-face allies, in most things of this nature. How well the *sobriquet* was merited, will be seen in the sequel.

Rivenoak and the Panther sat side by side,

awaiting the approach of their prisoner as Deerslayer put his moccasined foot on the strand; nor did either move or utter a syllable, until the young man had advanced into the centre of the area, and proclaimed his presence with his voice. This was done firmly, though in the simple manner that marked the character of the individual.

"Here I am, Mingos," he said in the dialect of the Delawares, a language that most present understood; "here I am, and there is the sun. One is not more true to the laws of natur', than the other has proved true to his word. I am your prisoner; do with me what you please. My business with man and 'arth is settled; nothing remains now but to meet the white man's God, accordin' to a white man's duties and gifts."

A murmur of approbation escaped even the women at this address, and for an instant there was a strong and pretty general desire to adopt into the tribe one who owned so brave a spirit. Still there were dissenters from this wish, among the principal of whom might be classed the Panther, and his sister, le Sumach, so called from the number of her children, who was the widow of le Loup Cervier, now known to have fallen by the hand of the captive. Native ferocity held one in subjection, while the corroding passion of revenge prevented the other from admitting any gentler

feeling at the moment. Not so with Rivenoak. This chief arose, stretched his arm before him, in a gesture of courtesy, and paid his compliments with an ease and dignity that a prince might have envied. As, in that band, his wisdom and eloquence were confessedly without rivals, he knew that on himself would properly fall the duty of first replying to the speech of the pale-face.

"Pale-face, you are honest," said the Huron orator. "My people are happy in having captured a man, and not a skulking fox. We now know you; we shall treat you like a brave. If you have slain one of our warriors, and helped to kill others, you have a life of your own ready to give away in return. Some of my young men thought that the blood of a pale-face was too thin; that it would refuse to run under the Huron knife. You will show them it is not so; your heart is stout as well as your body. It is a pleasure to make such a prisoner; should my warriors say that the death of le Loup Cervier ought not to be forgotten, and that he cannot travel towards the land of spirits alone, that his enemy must be sent to overtake him, they will remember that he fell by the hand of a brave, and send you after him with such signs of our friendship as shall not make him ashamed to keep your company. I have spoken; you know what I have said."

"True enough, Mingo, all true as the gospel," returned the simple-minded hunter; "you *have* spoken, and I *do* know not only what you have *said*, but what is still more important, what you *mean*. I dare to say your warrior the Lynx, was a stout-hearted brave, and worthy of your fr'indship and respect, but I do not feel unworthy to keep his company, without any passport from your hands. Nevertheless, here I am, ready to receive judgment from your council, if, indeed, the matter was not detarmined among you, afore I got back."

"My old men would not sit in council over a pale-face until they saw him among them," answered Rivenoak, looking around him a little ironically; "they said it would be like sitting in council over the winds; they go where they will, and come back as they see fit, and not otherwise. There was one voice that spoke in your favour, Deerslayer, but it was alone, like the song of the wren whose mate has been struck by the hawk."

"I thank that voice whosever it may have been, Mingo, and will say it was as true a voice as the rest were lying voices. A furlough is as binding on a pale-face, if he be honest, as it is on a red-skin; and was it not so, I would never bring disgrace on the Delawares among whom I may be said to have received my edication. But words are useless, and lead to braggin' feelin's; here I am; act your will on me."

Rivenoak made a sign of acquiescence; and. then a short conference was privately held among the chiefs. As soon as the latter ended; three or four young men fell back from among the armed group, and disappeared. Then it was signified to the prisoner that he was at liberty to go at large on the point, until a council was held concerning his fate. There was more of seeming, than of real confidence, however, in this apparent liberality, inasmuch as the young men mentioned, already formed a line of sentinels across the breadth of the point inland, and escape from any other part was out of the question. Even the canoe was removed beyond this line of sentinels, to a spot where it was considered safe from any sudden attempt. These precautions did not proceed from a failure of confidence, but from the circumstance that the prisoner had now complied with all the required conditions of his parole, and it would have been considered a commendable and honourable exploit to escape from his foes. So nice, indeed, were the distinctions drawn by the savages, in cases of this nature, that they often gave their victims a chance to evade the torture, deeming it as creditable to the captors to overtake, or to out-wit a fugitive, when his exertions were supposed to be quickened by the extreme jeopardy of his situation, as it was for him to get clear from so much extraordinary vigilance.

Nor was Deerslayer unconscious of, or forgetful of, his rights and of his opportunities. Could he now have seen any probable opening for an escape, the attempt would not have been delayed a minute. But the case seemed desperate. He was aware of the line of sentinels, and felt the difficulty of breaking through it, unharmed. The lake offered no advantages, as the canoe would have given his foes the greatest facilities for overtaking him; else would he have found it no difficult task to swim as far as the castle. As he walked about the point, he even examined the spot to ascertain if it offered no place of concealment; but its openness, its size, and the hundred watchful glances that were turned towards him, even while those who made them affected not to see him, prevented any such expedient from succeeding. The dread and disgrace of failure had no influence on Deerslayer, who deemed it ever a point of honour to reason and feel like a white man, rather than as an Indian, and who felt it a sort of duty to do all he could that did not involve a dereliction from principle, in order to save his life. Still he hesitated about making the effort, for he also felt that he ought to see the chance of success before he committed himself.

In the mean time the business of the camp appeared to proceed in its regular train. The

chiefs consulted apart, admitting no one but the Sumach to their councils; for she, the widow of the fallen warrior, had an exclusive right to be heard on such an occasion. The young men strolled about in indolent listlessness, awaiting the result with Indian patience, while the females prepared the feast that was to celebrate the termination of the affair, whether it proved fortunate or otherwise, for our hero. No one betrayed feeling; and an indifferent observer, beyond the extreme watchfulness of the sentinels, would have detected no extraordinary movement or sensation to denote the real state of things. Two or three old women put their heads together, and, it appeared, unfavourably to the prospect of Deerslayer, by their scowling looks and angry gestures; but a group of Indian girls were evidently animated by a different impulse, as was apparent by stolen glances that expressed pity and regret. In this condition of the camp, an hour soon glided away.

Suspense is, perhaps, the feeling of all others that is most difficult to be supported. When Deerslayer landed, he fully, in the course of a few minutes, expected to undergo the tortures of an Indian revenge, and he was prepared to meet his fate manfully; but the delay proved far more trying than the nearer approach of suffering, and

the intended victim began seriously to meditate some desperate effort at escape, as it might be from sheer anxiety to terminate the scene, when he was suddenly summoned to appear once more in front of his judges, who had already arranged the band in his former order, in readiness to receive him.

"Killer of the Deer," commenced Rivenoak, as soon as his captive stood before him, "my aged men have listened to wise words; they are ready to speak. You are a man whose fathers came from beyond the rising sun; we are children of the setting sun; we turn our faces towards the Great Sweet Lakes when we look towards our villages. It may be a wise country and full of riches towards the morning; but it is very pleasant towards the evening. We love most to look in that direction. When we gaze at the east, we feel afraid, canoe after canoe bringing more and more of your people in the track of the sun, as if their land was so full as to run over. The red men are few already; they have need of help. One of our best lodges has lately been emptied by the death of its master: it will be a long time before his son can grow big enough to sit in his place. There is his widow; she will want venison to feed her and her children, for her sons are yet like the young of the robin before they quit the

riest. By your hand has this great calamity befallen her. She has two duties; one to le Loup Cervier, and one to his children. Scalp for scalp, life for life, blood for blood, is one law; to feed her young, another. We know you, Killer of the Deer. You are honest; when you say a thing, it is so. You have but one tongue, and that is not forked like a snake's. Your head is never hid in the grass; all can see it. What you say, that will you do. You are just. When you have done wrong, it is your wish to do right again, as soon as you can. Here is the Sumach; she is alone in her wigwam, with children crying around her for food; yonder is a rifle; it is loaded and ready to be fired. Take the gun; go forth and shoot a deer; bring the venison and lay it before the widow of le Loup Cervier; feed her children; call yourself her husband. After which, your heart will no longer be Delaware, but Huron; le Sumach's ears will not hear the cries of her children; my people will count the proper number of warriors."

"I fear'd this Rivenoak," answered Deerslayer, when the other had ceased speaking: "yes, I did dread that it would come to this. Howsever, the truth is soon told, and that will put an end to all expectations on this head. Mingo, I 'm white, and Christian-born; 'twould ill become me to

take a wife, under red-skin forms, from among heathen. That which I wouldn't do in peaceable times and under a bright sun, still less would I do behind clouds in order to save my life. I may never marry; most likely Providence, in putting me up here in the woods has intended I should live single, and without a lodge of my own: but should such a thing come to pass, none but a woman of my own colour and gifts shall darken the door of my wigwam. As for feeding the young of your dead warrior, I would do that cheerfully, could it be done without discredit; but it cannot, seeing that I can never live in a Huron village. Your own young men must find the Sumach in venison, and the next time she marries, let her take a husband whose legs are not long enough to overrun territory that don't belong to him. We fou't a fair battle, and he fell; in this there is nothin' but what a brave expects, and should be ready to meet. As for getting a Mingo heart, as well might you expect to see grey hairs on a boy, or the blackberry growing on the pine. No, no, Huron; my gifts are white, so far as wives are consarned; it is Delaware in all things touchin' Indians."

These words were scarcely out of the mouth of Deerslayer, before a common murmur betrayed the dissatisfaction with which they had been

heard. The aged women, in particular, were loud in their expressions of disgust; and the gentle Sumach, herself, a woman quite old enough to be our hero's mother, was not the least pacific in her denunciations. But all the other manifestations of disappointment and discontent were thrown into the back-ground, by the fierce resentment of the Panther. This grim chief had thought it a degradation to permit his sister to become the wife of a pale-face of the Yengeese, at all, and had only given a reluctant consent to the arrangement —one by no means unusual among the Indians, however—at the earnest solicitations of the bereaved widow; and it goaded him to the quick to find his condescension slighted, the honour he had with so much regret been persuaded to accord, contemned. The animal from which he got his name does not glare on his intended prey with more frightful ferocity, than his eyes gleamed on the captive; nor was his arm backward in seconding the fierce resentment that almost consumed his breast.

"Dog of the pale-faces!" he exclaimed, in Iroquois, "go yell among the curs of your own evil hunting-grounds!"

The denunciation was accompanied by an appropriate action. Even while speaking, his arm was lifted, and the tomahawk hurled. Luckily

the loud tones of the speaker had drawn the eye of Deerslayer towards him, else would that moment have probably closed his career. So great was the dexterity with which this dangerous weapon was thrown, and so deadly the intent, that it would have riven the skull of the prisoner, had he not stretched forth an arm, and caught the handle in one of its turns, with a readiness quite as remarkable, as the skill with which the missile had been hurled. The projectile force was so great, notwithstanding, that when Deerslayer's arm was arrested, his hand was raised above and behind his own head, and in the very attitude necessary to return the attack. It is not certain whether the circumstance of finding himself unexpectedly in this menacing posture and armed, tempted the young man to retaliate, or whether sudden resentment overcame his forbearance and prudence. His eye kindled, however, and a small red spot appeared on each cheek, while he cast all his energy in the effort of his arm, and threw back the weapon at his assailant. The unexpectedness of this blow contributed to its success; the Panther neither raising an arm, nor bending his head to avoid it. The keen little axe struck the victim in a perpendicular line with the nose, directly between the eyes, literally braining him on the spot. Sallying forward, as the serpent

darts at his enemy even while receiving its own death-wound, this man of powerful frame fell his length into the open area formed by the circle, quivering in death. A common rush to his relief left the captive, for a single instant, quite without the crowd; and willing to make one desperate effort for life, he bounded off with the activity of a deer. There was but a breathless instant, when the whole band, old and young, women and children, abandoning the lifeless body of the Panther, where it lay, raised the yell of alarm, and followed in pursuit.

Sudden as had been the event which induced Deerslayer to make this desperate trial of speed, his mind was not wholly unprepared for the fearful emergency. In the course of the past hour, he had pondered well on the chances of such an experiment, and had shrewdly calculated all the details of success and failure. At the first leap, therefore, his body was completely under the direction of an intelligence that turned all its efforts to the best account, and prevented every thing like hesitation or indecision, at the important instant of the start. To this alone was he indebted for the first great advantage, that of getting through the line of sentinels unharmed. The manner in which this was done, though sufficiently simple, merits a description.

Although the shores of the point were not fringed with bushes, as was the case with most of the others on the lake, it was owing altogether to the circumstance that the spot had been so much used by hunters and fishermen. This fringe commenced on what might be termed the main land, and was as dense as usual, extending in long lines both north and south. In the latter direction then Deerslayer held his way; and, as the sentinels were a little without the commencement of this thicket, before the alarm was clearly communicated to them, the fugitive had gained its cover. To run among the bushes, however, was out of the question, and Deerslayer held his way for some forty or fifty yards, in the water which was barely knee deep, offering as great an obstacle to the speed of his pursuers, as it did to his own. As soon as a favourable spot presented, he darted through the line of bushes, and issued into the open woods.

Several rifles were discharged at Deerslayer while in the water, and more followed as he came out into the comparative exposure of the clear forest. But the direction of his line of flight, which partially crossed that of the fire, the haste with which the weapons had been aimed, and the general confusion that prevailed

in the camp, prevented any harm from being done. Bullets whistled past him, and many cut twigs from the branches at his side, but not one touched even his dress. The delay caused by these fruitless attempts was of great service to the fugitive, who had gained more than a hundred yards on even the leading men of the Hurons, ere something like concert and order had entered into the chase. To think of following with rifle in hand was out of the question; and after emptying their pieces in vague hopes of wounding their captive, the best runners of the Indians threw them aside, calling out to the women and boys to recover and load them again, as soon as possible.

Deerslayer knew too well the desperate nature of the struggle in which he was engaged, to lose one of the precious moments. He also knew that his only hope was to run in a straight line, for as soon as he began to turn, or double, the greater number of his pursuers would put escape out of the question. He held his way, therefore, in a diagonal direction up the acclivity, which was neither very high nor very steep, in this part of the mountain, but which was sufficiently toilsome for one contending for life, to render it painfully oppressive. There, however, he slackened his speed, to recover breath; proceed-

ing even at a quick walk, or a slow trot, along the more difficult parts of the way. The Hurons were whooping and leaping behind him; but this he disregarded, well knowing they must overcome the difficulties he had surmounted, ere they could reach the elevation to which he had attained. The summit of the first hill was now quite near him, and he saw, by the formation of the land, that a deep glen intervened, before the base of a second hill could be reached. Walking deliberately to the summit, he glanced eagerly about him, in every direction, in quest of a cover. None offered in the ground; but a fallen tree lay near him, and desperate circumstances require desperate remedies. This tree lay in a line parallel to the glen, at the brow of the hill; to leap on it, and then to force his person as close as possible under its lower side, took but a moment. Previously to disappearing from his pursuers, however, Deerslayer stood on the height, and gave a cry of triumph, as if exulting at the sight of the descent that lay before him.—In the next instant he was stretched beneath the tree.

No sooner was this expedient adopted, than the young man ascertained how desperate had been his own efforts, by the violence of the pulsations in his frame. He could hear his heart beat, and his breathing was like the action

of a bellows in quick motion. Breath was gained, however, and the heart soon ceased to throb, as if about to break through its confinement. The footsteps of those who toiled up the opposite side of the acclivity were now audible, and presently voices and treads announced the arrival of the pursuers. The foremost shouted as they reached the height; then, fearful that their enemy would escape under favour of the descent, each leaped upon the fallen tree, and plunged into the ravine, trusting to get a sight of the pursued, ere he reached the bottom. In this manner, Huron followed Huron, until Natty began to hope the whole had passed. Others succeeded, however, until quite forty had leaped over the tree; and then he counted them, as the surest mode of ascertaining how many could be behind. Presently all were in the bottom of the glen, quite a hundred feet below him, and some had even ascended part of the opposite hill, when it became evident an inquiry was making, as to the direction he had taken. This was the critical moment; and one of nerves less steady, or of a training that had been neglected, would have seized it to rise, and fly. Not so with Deerslayer. He still lay quiet, watching with jealous vigilance every movement below, and fast regaining his breath.

The Hurons now resembled a pack of hounds

at fault. Little was said, but each man ran about, examining the dead leaves, as the hound hunts for the lost scent. The great number of mocasins that had passed made the examination difficult, though the in-toe of an Indian was easily to be distinguished from the freer and wider step of a white man. Believing that no more pursuers remained behind, and hoping to steal away unseen, Deerslayer suddenly threw himself over the tree, and fell on the upper side. This achievement appeared to be effected successfully, and hope beat high in the bosom of the fugitive. Rising to his hands and feet, after a moment lost in listening to the sounds in the glen, in order to ascertain if he had been seen, the young man next scrambled to the top of the hill, a distance of only ten yards, in the expectation of getting its brow between him and his pursuers, and himself so far under cover. Even this was effected, and he rose to his feet, walking swiftly but steadily along the summit, in a direction opposite to that in which he had first fled. The nature of the calls in the glen, however, soon made him uneasy, and he sprang upon the summit again, in order to reconnoitre. No sooner did he reach the height than he was seen, and the chase renewed. As it was better footing on the level ground, Deer-

slayer now avoided the side-hill, holding his flight along the ridge; while the Hurons, judging from the general formation of the land, saw that the ridge would soon melt into the hollow, and kept to the latter, as the easiest mode of heading the fugitive. A few, at the same time, turned south with a view to prevent his escaping in that direction; while some crossed his trail towards the water, in order to prevent his retreat by the lake, running southerly.

The situation of Deerslayer was now more critical than it ever had been. He was virtually surrounded on three sides, having the lake on the fourth. But he had pondered well on all the chances, and took his measures with coolness, even while at the top of his speed. As is generally the case with the vigorous border-men, he could outrun any single Indian among his pursuers, who were principally formidable to him on account of their numbers, and the advantages they possessed in position; and he would not have hesitated to break off in a straight line, at any spot, could he have got the whole band again fairly behind him. But no such chance did, or indeed could now offer; and when he found that he was descending towards the glen by the melting away of the ridge, he turned short at right angles to his previous course, and

went down the declivity with tremendous velocity, holding his way towards the shore. Some of his pursuers came panting up the hill, in direct chase, while most still kept on in the ravine, intending to head him at its termination.

Deerslayer had now a different, though a desperate project in view. Abandoning all thoughts of escape by the woods, he made the best of his way towards the canoe. He knew where it lay; could it be reached, he had only to run the gauntlet of a few rifles, and success would be certain. None of the warriors had kept their weapons, which would have retarded their speed, and the risk would come either from the uncertain hands of the women, or from those of some well-grown boy; though most of the latter were already out in hot pursuit. Every thing seemed propitious to the execution of this plan, and the course being a continued descent, the young man went over the ground at a rate that promised a speedy termination to his toil.

As Deerslayer approached the point, several women and children were passed, but though the former endeavoured to cast dried branches between his legs, the terror inspired by his bold retaliation on the redoubted Panther was so great, that none dared come near enough seriously

to molest him. He went by all triumphantly, and reached the fringe of bushes. Plunging through these our hero found himself once more in the lake, and within fifty feet of the canoe. Here he ceased to run, for he well understood that his breath was now all-important to him. He even stooped, as he advanced, and cooled his parched mouth, by scooping up water in his hand to drink. Still the moments pressed; and he soon stood at the side of the canoe. The first glance told him that the paddles had been removed! This was a sore disappointment after all his efforts, and for a single moment he thought of turning, and of facing his foes by walking with dignity into the centre of the camp again. But an infernal yell, such as the American savage alone can raise, proclaimed the quick approach of the nearest of his pursuers, and the instinct of life triumphed. Preparing himself duly, and giving a right direction to its bows, he ran off into the water bearing the canoe before him, threw all his strength and skill into a last effort, and cast himself forward so as to fall into the bottom of the light craft, without materially impeding its way. Here he remained on his back, both to regain his breath, and to cover his person from the deadly rifle. The lightness, which was such an advantage in paddling the canoes, now operated unfa-

vourably. The material was so like a feather, that the boat had no momentum; else would the impulse in that smooth and placid sheet have impelled it to a distance from the shore, that would have rendered paddling with the hands safe. Could such a point once be reached, Deerslayer thought he might get far enough out to attract the attention of Chingachgook and Judith who would not fail to come to his relief with other canoes, a circumstance that promised every thing. As the young man lay at the bottom of the canoe, he watched its movements by studying the tops of the trees on the mountain-side, and judged of his distance by the time and the motion. Voices on the shore were now numerous, and he heard something said about manning the raft, which fortunately for the fugitive lay at a considerable distance, on the other side of the point.

Perhaps the situation of Deerslayer had not been more critical that day, than it was at this moment. It certainly had not been one half as tantalizing. He lay perfectly quiet for two or three minutes, trusting to the single sense of hearing, confident that the noise in the lake would reach his ears, did any one venture to approach by swimming. Once or twice he fancied that the element was stirred by the cautious movement of

an arm, and then he perceived it was the wash of the water on the pebbles of the strand; for, in mimicry of the ocean, it is seldom that those little lakes are so totally tranquil, as not to possess a slight heaving and setting on their shores. Suddenly all the voices ceased, and a death-like stillness pervaded the spot; a quietness as profound as if all lay in the repose of inanimate life. By this time, the canoe had drifted so far as to render nothing visible to Deerslayer, as he lay on his back, except the blue void of space, and a few of those brighter rays that proceed from the effulgence of the sun, marked his proximity. It was not possible to endure this uncertainty long. The young man well knew that the profound stillness foreboded evil, the savages never being so silent as when about to strike a blow; resembling the stealthy foot of the panther ere he takes his leap. He took out a knife, and was about to cut a hole through the bark in order to get a view of the shore, when he paused from a dread of being seen in the operation, which would direct the enemy where to aim their bullets. At this instant a rifle *was* fired, and the ball pierced both sides of the canoe, within eighteen inches of the spot where his head lay. This was close work, but our hero had too lately gone through that which was closer, to be appalled. He lay still half a minute longer,

and then he saw the summit of an oak coming slowly within his narrow horizon.

Unable to account for this change, Deerslayer could restrain his impatience no longer. Hitching his body along, with the utmost caution, he got his eye at the bullet-hole, and fortunately commanded a very tolerable view of the point. The canoe, by one of those imperceptible impulses that so often decide the fate of men as well as the course of things, had inclined southerly, and was slowly drifting down the lake. It was lucky that Deerslayer had given it a shove sufficiently vigorous to send it past the end of the point ere it took this inclination, or it must have gone ashore again. As it was, it drifted so near it as to bring the tops of two or three trees within the range of the young man's view, as has been mentioned, and, indeed, to come in quite as close proximity with the extremity of the point as was at all safe. The distance could not much have exceeded a hundred feet, though fortunately a light current of air, from the south-west, began to set it slowly off shore.

Deerslayer now felt the urgent necessity of resorting to some expedient to get farther from his foes, and if possible, to apprise his friends of his situation. The distance rendered the last difficult, while the proximity to the point rendered the first

indispensable. As was usual in such craft, a large, round, smooth stone was in each end of the canoe, for the double purposes of seats and ballast; one of these was within reach of his feet. This stone he contrived to get so far between his legs as to reach it with his hands, and then he managed to roll it to the side of its fellow in the bows, where the two served to keep the trim of the light boat, while he worked his own body as far aft as possible. Before quitting the shore, and as soon as he perceived that the paddles were gone, Deerslayer had thrown a bit of dead branch into the canoe, and this was within reach of his arm. Removing the cap he wore, he put it on the end of this stick, and just let it appear over the edge of the canoe, as far as possible from his own person. This *ruse* was scarcely adopted, before the young man had a proof how much he had underrated the intelligence of his enemies. In contempt of an artifice so shallow and commonplace, a bullet was fired directly through another part of the canoe, which actually razed his skin. He dropped the cap, and instantly raised it immediately over his head as a safeguard. It would seem that this second artifice was unseen, or what was more probable, the Hurons feeling certain of recovering their captive, wished to take him alive.

Deerslayer lay passive a few minutes longer, his eye at the bullet hole, however, and much did he rejoice at seeing that he was drifting gradually, farther and farther from the shore. When he looked upward, the tree-tops had disappeared, but he soon found the canoe was slowly turning, so as to prevent his getting a view of anything at his peep-hole but of the two extremities of the lake. He now bethought him of the stick, which was crooked and offered some facilities for rowing without the necessity of rising. The experiment succeeded on trial, better even than he had hoped, though his great embarrassment was to keep the canoe straight. That his present manœuvre was seen, soon became apparent by the clamour on the shore, and a bullet entering the stern of the canoe, traversed its length, whistling between the arms of our hero, and passed out at the head. This satisfied the fugitive that he was getting away with tolerable speed, and induced him to increase his efforts. He was making a stronger push than common, when another messenger from the point broke the stick out-board, and at once deprived him of his oar. As the sound of voices seemed to grow more and more distant, however, Deerslayer determined to leave all to the drift until he believed himself beyond the reach of bullets. This was nervous work,

but it was the wisest of all the expedients that offered; and the young man was encouraged to persevere in it, by the circumstance that he felt his face fanned by the air, a proof that there was a little more wind.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Nor widows' tears, nor tender orphans' cries
Can stop th' invader's force;
Nor swelling seas, nor threatening skies,
Prevent the pirate's course:
Their lives to selfish ends decreed,
Through blood and rapine they proceed;
No anxious thoughts of ill-repute,
Suspend the impetuous and unjust pursuit;
But power and wealth obtained, guilty and great,
Their fellow-creatures' fears they raise, or urge their hate."

CONGREVE.

By this time Deerslayer had been twenty minutes in the canoe, and he began to grow a little impatient for some signs of relief from his friends. The position of the boat still prevented his seeing in any direction, unless it were up or down the lake; and though he knew that his line of sight must pass within a hundred yards of the castle, it in fact passed that distance to the westward of the buildings. The profound stillness troubled him also, for he knew not whether to

ascribe it to the increasing space between him and the Indians, or to some new artifice. At length, wearied with fruitless watchfulness, the young man turned himself on his back, closed his eyes, and awaited the result in determined acquiescence. If the savages could so completely control their thirst for revenge, he was resolved to be as calm as themselves, and to trust his fate to the interposition of the currents and air.

Some additional ten minutes may have passed in this quiescent manner on both sides, when Deerslayer thought he heard a slight noise like a low rubbing against the bottom of his canoe. He opened his eyes of course, in expectation of seeing the face or arm of an Indian rising from the water, and found that a canopy of leaves was impending directly over his head. Starting to his feet, the first object that met his eye was Rivenoak, who had so far aided the slow progress of the boat, as to draw it on the point, the grating on the strand being the sound that had first given our hero the alarm. The change in the drift of the canoe had been altogether owing to the baffling nature of the light currents of air, aided by some eddies in the water.

"Come," said the Huron, with a quiet gesture of authority to order his prisoner to land; "my young friend has sailed about till he is tired; he

will forget how to run again unless he uses his legs."

"You've the best of it, Huron," returned Deerslayer, stepping steadily from the canoe, and passively following his leader to the open area of the point; "Providence has helped you in an onexpected manner. I'm your prisoner ag'in, and I hope you'll allow that I'm as good at breaking gaol, as I am at keeping furloughs."

"My young friend is a moose!" exclaimed the Huron. "His legs are very long; they have given my young men trouble. But he is not a fish; he cannot find his way in the lake. We did not shoot him; fish are taken in nets and not killed by bullets. When he turns moose again, he will be treated like a moose."

"Ay, have your talk, Rivenoak; make the most of your advantage. 'Tis your right I suppose, and I know it is your gift. On that p'int there'll be no words atween us; for all men must and ought to follow their gifts. Howsever, when your women begin to ta'nt and abuse me, as I suppose will soon happen, let 'em remember that if a paleface struggles for life so long as it's lawful and manful, he knows how to loosen his hold on it decently, when he feels that the time has come. I'm your captyve; work your will on me."

"My brother has had a long run on the hills,

and a pleasant sail on the water," returned Rivenoak more mildly, smiling at the same time, in a way that his listener knew denoted pacific intentions. "He has seen the woods; he has seen the water; which does he like best? Perhaps, he has seen enough to change his mind, and make him hear reason."

"Speak out, Huron. Something is in your thoughts, and the sooner it is said, the sooner you'll get my answer."

"That is straight! There is no turning in the talk of my pale-face friend, though he is a fox in running. I will speak to him; his ears are now open wider than before, and his eyes are not shut. The Sumach is poorer than ever. Once she had a brother and a husband. She had children too. The time came, and the husband started for the happy hunting-grounds without saying farewell; he left her alone with his children. This he could not help, or he would not have done it; le Loup Cervier was a good husband. It was pleasant to see the venison, and wild ducks, and geese, and bear's meat, that hung in his lodge in winter. It is now gone; it will not keep in warm weather. Who shall bring it back again? Some thought the brother would not forget his sister, and that next winter he would see that the lodge should not be empty. We thought this; but the Panther

yelled, and followed the husband on the path of death. They are now trying which shall first reach the happy hunting-grounds. Some think the Lynx can run fastest, and some think the Panther can jump the farthest. The Sumach thinks both will travel so fast and so far, that neither will ever come back. Who shall feed her and her young? The man who told her husband and her brother to quit her lodge that there might be room for him to come into it. He is a great hunter, and we know that the woman will never want."

"Ay, Huron, this is soon settled, according to your notions; but it goes sorely ag'in the grain of a white man's feelin's. I've heard of men's saving their lives this-away, and I've know'd them that would prefer death to such a sort of captivity. For my part, I do not seek my end; nor do I seek matrimony."

"The pale-face will think of this while my people get ready for the council. He will be told what will happen. Let him remember how hard it is to lose a husband and a brother. Go: when we want him, the name of Deerslayer will be called."

This conversation had been held with no one near but the speakers. Of all the band that had so lately thronged the place, Rivenoak alone was visible. The rest seemed to have totally aban-

doned the spot. Even the furniture, clothes, arms, and other property of the camp had entirely disappeared, and the place bore no other proofs of the crowd that had so lately occupied it, than the traces of their fires and resting-places, and the trodden earth that still showed the marks of their feet. So sudden and unexpected a change caused Deerslayer a good deal of surprise and some uneasiness, for he had never known it to occur in the course of his experience among the Delawares. He suspected, however, and rightly, that a change of encampment was intended, and that the mystery of the movement was resorted to, in order to work on his apprehensions.

Rivenoak walked up the vista of trees, as soon as he ceased speaking, leaving Deerslayer by himself. The chief disappeared behind the covers of the forest, and one unpractised in such scenes might have believed the prisoner left to the dictates of his own judgment. But the young man, while he felt a little amazement at the dramatic aspect of things, knew his enemies too well to fancy himself at liberty, or a free agent. Still he was ignorant how far the Hurons meant to carry their artifices, and he determined to bring the question as soon as practicable to the proof. Affecting an indifference he was far from feeling, he strolled about the area, gradually getting

nearer and nearer to the spot where he had landed, when he suddenly quickened his pace, though carefully avoiding all appearance of flight, and pushing aside the bushes he stepped upon the beach. The canoe was gone, nor could he see any traces of it, after walking to the northern and southern verges of the point, and examining the shores in both directions. It was evidently removed beyond his reach and knowledge, and under circumstances to show that such had been the intention of the savages.

Deerslayer now better understood his actual situation. He was a prisoner on the narrow tongue of land, vigilantly watched beyond a question, and with no other means of escape than that of swimming. He again thought of this last expedient, but the certainty that the canoe would be sent in chase, and the desperate nature of the chances of success, deterred him from the undertaking. While on the strand, he came to a spot where the bushes had been cut, and thrown into a small pile. Removing a few of the upper branches, he found beneath them the dead body of the Panther. He knew that it was kept until the savages might find a place to inter it, when it would be beyond the reach of the scalping-knife. He gazed wistfully towards the castle, but there all seemed to be silent and desolate; and a feeling of lone-

liness and desertion came over him to increase the gloom of the moment.

"God's will be done!" murmured the young man, as he walked sorrowfully away from the beach, entering again beneath the arches of the wood; "God's will be done, on 'arth as it is in heaven! I did hope that my days would not be numbered so soon; but it matters little, after all. A few more winters, and a few more summers, and 'twould have been over, accordin to natur'. Ah 's me! the young and actyve seldom think death possible, till he grins in their faces, and tells 'em the hour is come!"

While this soliloquy was being pronounced, the hunter advanced into the area, where to his surprise he saw Hetty alone, evidently awaiting his return. The girl carried the Bible under her arm, and her face, over which a shadow of gentle melancholy was usually thrown, now seemed sad and downcast. Moving nearer, Deerslayer spoke.

"Poor Hetty," he said, "times have been so troublesome of late, that I 'd altogether forgotten you; we meet, as it might be, to mourn over what is to happen. I wonder what has become of Chingachgook and Wah!"

"Why did you kill the Huron, Deerslayer," returned the girl, reproachfully. "Don't you

know your commandments, which say, 'Thou shalt not kill!' They tell me you have now slain the woman's husband and brother."

"It 's true, my good Hetty,—'tis gospel truth, and I 'll not deny what has come to pass. But you must remember, gal, that many things are lawful in war, which would be onlawful in peace. The husband was shot in open fight; or, open so far as I was consarned, while he had a better cover than common;—and the brother brought his end on himself by casting his tomahawk at an unarmed prisoner. Did you witness that deed, gal?"

"I saw it, and was sorry it happened, Deerslayer; for I hoped you wouldn't have returned blow for blow; but good for evil."

"Ah, Hetty, that may do among the missionaries, but 'twould make an onsartain life in the woods. The Panther craved my blood, and he was foolish enough to throw arms into my hands, at the very moment he was striving after it. 'Twould have been ag'in natur' not to raise a hand in such a trial, and 'twould have done discredit to my training and gifts. No, no; I 'm as willing to give every man his own, as another; and so I hope you 'll testify to them that will be likely to question you as to what you 've seen this day."

"Deerslayer, do you mean to marry Sumach, now she has neither husband nor brother to feed her?"

"Are such your idees of matrimony, Hetty? Ought the young to wive with the old—the pale-face with the red-skin—the Christian with the heathen? It's ag'in reason and natur', and so you 'll see, if you think of it a moment."

"I've always heard mother say," returned Hetty, averting her face, more from a feminine instinct than from any consciousness of wrong, "that people should never marry until they loved each other better than brothers and sisters; and I suppose that is what you mean. Sumach *is* old, and you *are* young."

"Ay, and she's red, and I'm white. Besides, Hetty; suppose you was a wife, now, having married some young man of your own years, and state, and colour—Hurry Harry, for instance,"—Deerslayer selected this example, simply from the circumstance that he was the only young man known to both,—"and that he had fallen on a war-path, would you wish to take to your bosom for a husband the man that slew him?"

"Oh! no, no, no," returned the girl, shuddering. "*That* would be wicked, as well as heartless! No Christian girl could, or would, do that. I never shall be the wife of Hurry, I know; but

were he my husband, no man should ever be it again, after his death."

"I thought it would get to this, Hetty, when you come to understand sarcumstances. 'Tis a moral impossibility that I should ever marry Sumach; and, though Indian weddin's have no priests, and not much religion, a white man who knows his gifts and duties, can't profit by that, and so make his escape at the fitting time. I do think death would be more nat'ral like, and welcome, than wedlock with this woman."

"Don't say it too loud," interrupted Hetty, impatiently; "I suppose she will not like to hear it. I 'm sure Hurry would rather marry even me, than suffer torments, though I *am* feeble-minded; and I am sure it would kill me to think he 'd prefer death to being my husband."

"Ay, gal; you an't Sumach, but a comely young Christian, with a good heart, pleasant smile, and kind eye. Hurry might be proud to get you, and that, too, not in misery and sorrow, but in his best and happiest days. Howsever, take my advice, and never talk to Hurry about these things; he 's only a borderer; at the best."

"I wouldn't tell him, for the world!" exclaimed the girl, looking about her like one affrighted, and blushing, she knew not why.

"Mother always said young women shouldn't be forward, and speak their minds before they're asked;—oh! I never forgot what mother told me. 'Tis a pity Hurry is so handsome, Deerslayer; I do think fewer girls would like him then, and he would sooner know his own mind."

"Poor gal, poor gal, it's plain enough how it is; but the Lord will bear in mind one of your simple heart, and kind feelin's! We'll talk no more of these things; if you had reason, you'd be sorrowful at having let others so much into your secret. Tell me, Hetty, what has become of all the Hurons, and why they let you roam about the p'int, as if you, too, was a prisoner?"

"I 'm no prisoner, Deerslayer, but a free girl, and go when and where I please. Nobody dare hurt *me!* If they did, God would be angry—as I can show them in the Bible. No—no—Hetty Hutter is not afraid; *she*'s in good hands. The Hurons are up yonder in the woods, and keep a good watch on us both, I 'll answer for it, since all the women and children are on the look-out. Some are burying the body of the poor girl who was shot last night, so that the enemy and the wild beasts can't find it. I told 'em that father and mother lay in the lake, but I wouldn't let them know in what part of it, for Judith and

I don't want any of their heathenish company in our burying ground."

"Ah's! me;—Well, it *is* an awful despatch to be standing here, alive and angry, and with the feelin's up and furious, one hour, and then to be carried away at the next, and put out of sight of mankind in a hole in the 'arth! No one knows what will happen to him on a war-path, that 's sartain."

Here the stirring of leaves and the cracking of dried twigs interrupted the discourse, and apprised Deerslayer of the approach of his enemies. The Hurons closed around the spot that had been prepared for the coming scene, and in the centre of which the intended victim now stood in a circle—the armed men being so distributed among the feebler members of the band, that there was no safe opening through which the prisoner could break. But the latter no longer contemplated flight; the recent trial having satisfied him of his inability to escape, when pursued so closely by numbers. On the contrary, all his energies were aroused in order to meet his expected fate, with a calmness that should do credit to his colour and his manhood; one equally removed from recreant alarm and savage boasting.

When Rivenoak reappeared in the circle, he

occupied his old place at the head of the area. Several of the elder warriors stood near him; but now that the brother of Sumach had fallen, there was no longer any recognised chief present, whose influence and authority offered a dangerous rivalry to his own. Nevertheless, it is well known that little which could be called monarchical, or despotic, entered into the politics of the North American tribes, although the first colonists, bringing with them to this hemisphere the notions and opinions of their own countries, often dignified the chief men of those primitive nations with the titles of kings and princes. Hereditary influence did certainly exist; but there is much reason to believe it existed rather as a consequence of hereditary merit and acquired qualifications, than as a birth-right. Rivenoak, however, had not even this claim—having risen to consideration purely by the force of talents, sagacity, and, as Bacon expresses it, in relation to all distinguished statesmen, "by a union of great and mean qualities;" a truth of which the career of the profound Englishman himself furnishes so apt an illustration.

Next to arms, eloquence offers the great avenue to popular favour, whether it be in civilized or savage life; and Rivenoak had succeeded, as so many have succeeded before him, quite as much

by rendering fallacies acceptable to his listeners, as by any profound or learned expositions of truth, or the accuracy of his logic. Nevertheless, he had influence; and was far from being altogether without just claims to its possession. Like most men who reason more than they feel, the Huron was not addicted to the indulgence of the mere ferocious passions of his people: he had been commonly found on the side of mercy in all the scenes of vindictive torture and revenge that had occurred in his tribe, since his own attainment to power. On the present occasion, he was reluctant to proceed to extremities, although the provocation was so great; still it exceeded his ingenuity to see how that alternative could well be avoided. Sumach resented her rejection more than she did the deaths of her husband and brother, and there was little probability that the woman would pardon a man who had so unequivocally preferred death to her embraces. Without her forgiveness, there was scarce a hope that the tribe could be induced to overlook its loss; and even to Rivenoak, himself, much as he was disposed to pardon, the fate of our hero now appeared to be almost hopelessly sealed.

When the whole band was arrayed around the captive a grave silence, so much the more threatening from its profound quiet, pervaded the place.

Deerslayer perceived that the women and boys had been preparing splinters of the fat pine roots, which he well knew were to be stuck into his flesh, and set in flames, while two or three of the young men held the thongs of bark with which he was to be bound. The smoke of a distant fire announced that the burning brands were in preparation, and several of the elder warriors passed their fingers over the edges of their tomahawks, as if to prove their keenness and temper. Even the knives seemed loosened in their sheathes, impatient for the bloody and merciless work to begin.

"Killer of the Deer," recommenced Rivenoak, certainly without any signs of sympathy or pity in his manner, though with calmness and dignity; "Killer of the Deer, it is time that my people knew their minds. The sun is no longer over our heads; tired of waiting on the Hurons, he has begun to fall near the pines on this side of the valley. He is travelling fast towards the country of our French fathers; it is to warn his children that their lodges are empty, and that they ought to be at home. The roaming wolf has his den, and he goes to it, when he wishes to see his young. The Iroquois are not poorer than the wolves. They have villages, and wigwams, and fields of corn; the good spirits will be tired of

watching them alone. My people must go back, and see to their own business. There will be joy in the lodges when they hear our whoop from the forest! It will be a sorrowful whoop; when it is understood grief will come after it. There will be one scalp-whoop, but there will be only one. We have the fur of the Muskrat; his body is among the fishes. Deerslayer must say whether another scalp shall be on our pole. Two lodges are empty; a scalp, living or dead, is wanted at each door."

"Then take 'em dead, Huron," firmly, but altogether without dramatic boasting, returned the captive. "My hour is come, I do suppose; and what must be, must. If you are bent on the tortur', I'll do my endivours to bear up agin it, though no man can say how far his natur' will stand pain, until he's been tried."

"The pale-face cur begins to put his tail between his legs!" cried a young and garrulous savage, who bore the appropriate title of the Corbeau Rouge; a *sobriquet* he had gained from the French, by his facility in making unseasonable noises, and an undue tendency to hear his own voice: "he is no warrior; he has killed the Loup Cervier when looking behind him not to see the flash of his own rifle. He grunts like a hog already; when the Huron women begin to tor-

ment him, he will cry like the young of the catamount. He is a Delaware woman, dressed in the skin of a Yengeese!"

"Have your say, young man; have your say," returned Deerslayer, unmoved; "you know no better, and I can overlook it. Talking may aggravate women, but can hardly make knives sharper, fire hotter, or rifles more sartain."

Rivenoak now interfered, reproving the Red Crow for his premature interference, and then directed the proper persons to bind the captive. This expedient was adopted, not from any apprehensions that he would escape, or from any necessity, that was yet apparent of his being unable to endure the torture with his limbs free, but from an ingenious design of making him feel his helplessness, and of gradually sapping his resolution, by undermining it as it might be, little by little. Deerslayer offered no resistance. He submitted his arms and his legs, freely if not cheerfully, to the ligaments of bark which were bound around them, by order of the chief, in a way to produce as little pain as possible. These directions were secret, and given in the hope that the captive would finally save himself from any serious bodily suffering, by consenting to take the Sumach for a wife. As soon as the body of Deerslayer was withed in bark sufficiently to create

a lively sense of helplessness he was literally carried to a young tree and bound against it, in a way that effectually prevented it from moving, as well as from falling. The hands were laid flat against the legs, and thongs were passed over all, in a way nearly to incorporate the prisoner with the tree. His cap was then removed, and he was left half-standing, half-sustained by his bonds, to face the coming scene in the best manner he could.

Previously to proceeding to anything like extremities, it was the wish of Rivenoak to put his captive's resolution to the proof, by renewing the attempt at a compromise. This could be effected only in one manner, the acquiescence of the Sumach being indispensably necessary to a compromise of her right to be revenged. With this view then the woman was next desired to advance, and to look to her own interest; no agent being considered as efficient as the principal herself in this negociation. The Indian females, when girls, are usually mild and submissive, with musical tones, pleasant voices, and merry laughs; but toil and suffering generally deprive them of most of these advantages by the time they have reached an age which the Sumach had long before passed. To render their voices harsh, it would seem to require active, malignant passions, though when

excited, their screams can rise to a sufficiently conspicuous degree of discordancy to assert their claim to possess this distinctive peculiarity of the sex. The Sumach was not altogether without feminine attraction, however, and had so recently been deemed handsome in her tribe, as not to have yet learned the full influence that time and exposure produce on man as well as on woman. By an arrangement of Rivenoak's, some of the women around her had been employing the time in endeavouring to persuade the bereaved widow that there was still a hope Deerslayer might be prevailed on to enter her wigwam, in preference to entering the world of spirits, and this, too, with a success that previous symptoms scarcely justified. All this was the result of a resolution on the part of the chief to leave no proper means unemployed in order to get the greatest hunter that was then thought to exist in all that region transferred to his own nation, as well as a husband for a woman who he felt would be likely to be troublesome, were any of her claims to the attention and care of the tribe overlooked.

In conformity with this scheme, the Sumach had been secretly advised to advance into the circle, and to make her appeal to the prisoner's sense of justice before the band had recourse to the last experiment. The woman, nothing loth,

consented; for there was some such attraction, in becoming the wife of a noted hunter among the females of the tribes, as is experienced by the sex in more refined life, when they bestow their hands on the affluent. As the duties of a mother were thought to be paramount to all other considerations, the widow felt none of that embarrassment in preferring her claims, to which even a female fortune-hunter among ourselves, might be liable. When she stood forth, before the whole party, therefore, the children that she led by the hand fully justified all she did.

"You see me before you, cruel pale-face," the woman commenced; "your spirit must tell you my errand. I have found *you;* I cannot find le Loup Cervier, nor the Panther. I have looked for them in the lake, in the woods, in the clouds. I cannot say where they have gone."

"No man knows, good Sumach, no man knows," interposed the captive. "When the spirit leaves the body it passes into a world beyond our knowledge, and the wisest way, for them that are left behind, is to hope for the best. No doubt both your warriors have gone to the happy hunting-grounds, and at the proper time you will see 'em ag'in, in their improved state. The wife and sister of braves must have looked forward to some such tarmination of their 'arthly careers."

"Cruel pale-face, what had my warriors done that you should slay them? They were the best hunters, and the boldest young men of their tribe; the Great Spirit intended that they should live until they withered like the branches of the hemlock, and fell of their own weight."

"Nay, nay, good Sumach," interrupted the Deerslayer, whose love of truth was too indomitable to listen to such hyperbole, with patience, even though it came from the torn breast of a widow,—"Nay, nay, good Sumach, this is a little out-doing red-skin privileges. Young man was neither, any more than you can be called a young woman;" and as to the Great Spirit's intending that they should fall otherwise than they did, that's a grievous mistake, inasmuch as what the Great Spirit intends, is sartain to come to pass. Then, ag'in, it's plain enough neither of your fri'nds did me any harm; I raised my hand ag'in 'em on account of what they were *striving* to do, rather than what they did. This is nat'ral law, 'to do, lest they should be done by.'"

"It is so. Sumach has but one tongue; she can tell but one story. The pale-face struck the Hurons, lest the Hurons should strike him. The Hurons are a just nation; they will forget it. The chiefs will shut their eyes and pretend not to have seen it. The young men will believe the Panther and the Lynx have gone to far-off hunts;

and the Sumach will take her children by the hand, and go into the lodge of the pale-face, and say, 'See; these are *your* children—they are also mine; feed us, and we will live with you.'"

"The tarms are onadmissable, woman; and, though I feel for your losses, which must be hard to bear, the tarms cannot be accepted. As to givin' you ven'son, in case we lived near enough together, that would be no great expl'ite; but as for becomin' your husband, and the father of your children, to be honest with you, I feel no callin' that-a-way."

"Look at this boy, cruel pale-face; he has no father to teach him to kill the deer, or to take scalps. See this girl; what young man will come to look for a wife in a lodge that has no head? There are more among my people in the Canadas, and the Killer of Deer will find as many mouths to feed, as his heart can wish for."

"I tell you, woman," exclaimed Deerslayer, whose imagination was far from seconding the appeal of the widow, and who began to grow restive under the vivid pictures she was drawing, "all this is nothing to me. People and kindred must take care of their own fatherless, leaving them that have no children to their own loneliness. As for me, I have no offspring, and I want no wife. Now, go away, Sumach; leave me in

the hands of your chiefs; for my colour, and gifts, and natur' itself, cry out ag'in the idee of taking you for a wife."

It is unnecessary to expatiate on the effect of this down-right refusal of the woman's proposals. If there was any thing like tenderness in her bosom, — and no woman was, probably, ever entirely without that feminine quality,—it all disappeared at this plain announcement. Fury, rage, mortified pride, and a volcano of wrath, burst out at one explosion, converting her into a sort of maniac, as it might be at the touch of a magician's wand. Without deigning a reply in words, she made the arches of the forest ring with screams, and then flew forward at her victim, seizing him by the hair, which she appeared resolute to draw out by the roots. It was some time before her grasp could be loosened. Fortunately for the prisoner, her rage was blind, since his total helplessness left him entirely at her mercy; had it been better directed it might have proved fatal before any relief could have been offered. As it was, she did succeed in wrenching out two or three hands'-full of hair, before the young men could tear her away from her victim.

The insult that had been offered to the Sumach was deemed an insult to the whole tribe; not so much, however, on account of any respect that

was felt for the woman, as on account of the honour of the Huron nation. Sumach, herself, was generally considered to be as acid as the berry from which she derived her name; and now that her great supporters, her husband and brother, were both gone, few cared about concealing their aversion. Nevertheless, it had become a point of honour to punish the pale-face who disdained a Huron woman, and more particularly one who coolly preferred death to relieving the tribe from the support of a widow and her children. The young men showed an impatience to begin to torture, that Rivenoak understood; and as his elder associates manifested no disposition to permit any longer delay, he was compelled to give the signal for the infernal work to proceed.

CHAPTER IX.

"The ugly bear now minded not the stake,
Nor how the cruel mastiffs do him tear;
The stag lay still, unroused from the brake,
The foamy boar feared not the hunter's spear:
All thing was still in desert, bush, and briar."

LORD DORSET.

It was one of the common expedients of the savages, on such occasions, to put the nerves of their victims to the severest proofs. On the other hand, it was a matter of Indian pride, to betray no yielding to terror, or pain; but for the prisoner to provoke his enemies to such acts of violence as would soonest produce death. Many a warrior had been known to bring his own sufferings to a more speedy termination, by taunting reproaches and reviling language, when he found that his physical system was giving way under the agony of sufferings, produced by a hellish ingenuity, that might well eclipse all that has been said of the infernal devices of religious persecution. This happy expedient of taking refuge from the ferocity of his foes in their passions was denied Deer-

slayer, however, by his peculiar notions of the duty of a white man; and he had stoutly made up his mind to endure every thing, in preference to disgracing his colour.

No sooner did the young men understand that they were at liberty to commence, than some of the boldest and most forward among them sprang into the arena, tomahawk in hand. Here they prepared to throw that dangerous weapon, the object being to strike the tree, as near as possible to the victim's head, without absolutely hitting him. This was so hazardous an experiment, that none but those who were known to be exceedingly expert with the weapon, were allowed to enter the lists, at all, lest an early death might interfere with the expected entertainment. In the truest hands, it was seldom that the captive escaped injury in these trials; and it often happened that death followed, even when the blow was not premeditated. In the particular case of our hero, Rivenoak and the older warriors were apprehensive that the example of the Panther's fate might prove a motive with some fiery spirit, suddenly to sacrifice his conqueror, when the temptation of effecting it in precisely the same manner, and possibly with the identical weapon with which the warrior had fallen, offered. This circumstance, of itself, rendered the ordeal of

the tomahawk doubly critical for the Deerslayer.

It would seem, however, that all who now entered what we shall call the lists, were more disposed to exhibit their own dexterity, than to resent the deaths of their comrades. Each prepared himself for the trial, with the feelings of rivalry rather than with the desire for vengeance; and for the first few minutes the prisoner had little more connection with the result, than grew out of the interest that necessarily attached itself to a living target. The young men were eager, instead of being fierce, and Rivenoak thought he still saw signs of being able to save the life of the captive, when the vanity of the young men had been gratified; always admitting that it was not sacrificed to the delicate experiments that were about to be made.

The first youth who presented himself for the trial, was called The Raven, having as yet had no opportunity of obtaining a more warlike *sobriquet*. He was remarkable for high pretension, rather than for skill, or exploits; and those who knew his character thought the captive in imminent danger, when he took his stand, and poised the tomahawk. Nevertheless, the young man was good-natured, and no thought was uppermost in his mind other than the desire to make a better

cast, than any of his fellows. Deerslayer got an inkling of this warrior's want of reputation, by the injunctions that he had received from the seniors; who, indeed, would have objected to his appearing in the arena at all, but for an influence derived from his father, an aged warrior of great merit who was then in the lodges of the tribe. Still, our hero maintained an appearance of self-possession. He had made up his mind that his hour was come, and it would have been a mercy, instead of a calamity, to fall by the unsteadiness of the first hand that was raised against him. After a suitable number of flourishes, and gesticulations, that promised much more than he could perform, the Raven let the tomahawk quit his hand. The weapon whirled through the air, with the usual evolutions, cut a chip from the sapling to which the prisoner was bound, within a few inches of his cheek, and stuck in a large oak that grew several yards behind him. This was decidedly a bad effort, and a common sneer proclaimed as much, to the great mortification of the young man. On the other hand, there was a general, but suppressed murmur of admiration at the steadiness with which the captive stood the trial. The head was the only part he could move, and this had been purposely left free, that the tormentors might have the amusement and the

tormented endure the shame, of dodging, and otherwise attempting to avoid the blows. Deerslayer disappointed these hopes, by a command of nerve that rendered his whole body as immoveable as the tree to which it was bound. Nor did he even adopt the natural and usual expedient of shutting his eyes; the firmest and oldest warrior of the red men never having more disdainfully denied himself this advantage, under similar circumstances.

The Raven had no sooner made his unsuccessful and puerile effort, than he was succeeded by le Daim-Mose, or The Moose; a middle-aged warrior, who was particularly skilful in the use of the tomahawk, and from whose attempt the spectators confidently looked for gratification. This man had none of the good-nature of the Raven, but he would gladly have sacrificed the captive to his hatred of the pale-faces generally, were it not for the greater interest he felt in his own success as one particularly skilful in the use of this weapon. He took his stand quietly, but with an air of confidence, poised his little axe but a single instant, advanced a foot with a quick motion, and threw. Deerslayer saw the keen instrument whirling towards him, and believed all was over; still, he was not touched. The tomahawk had actually bound the head of the captive to the tree, by

carrying before it some of his hair; having buried itself deep beneath the soft bark. A general yell expressed the delight of the spectators, and the Moose felt his heart soften a little towards the prisoner, whose steadiness of nerve alone enabled him to give this evidence of his consummate skill.

Le Daim-Mose was succeeded by the Bounding Boy, or *le Garçon qui Bondit*, who came leaping into the circle like a hound, or a goat at play. This was one of those elastic youths, whose muscles seemed always in motion, and who either affected, or who from habit was actually unable to move in any other manner, than by showing the antics just mentioned. Nevertheless he was both brave and skilful, and had gained the respect of his people by deeds in war as well as success in the hunts. A far nobler name would long since have fallen to his share, had not a Frenchman of rank inadvertently given him this *sobriquet*, which he religiously preserved as coming from his great father, who lived beyond the wide salt lake. The Bounding Boy skipped about in front of the captive, menacing him with his tomahawk, now on one side, and now on another, and then again in front, in the vain hope of being able to extort some sign of fear by this parade of danger. At length Deerslayer's patience became exhausted

by all this mummery, and he spoke for the first time since the trial had actually commenced.

"Throw away, Huron!" he cried, "or your tomahawk will forget its ar'n'd. Why do you keep loping about like a fa'a'n that's showing its dam how well it can skip, when you're a warrior grown yourself, and a warrior grown defies you and all your silly antics? Throw, or the Huron gals will laugh in your face."

Although not intended to produce such an effect, the last words aroused the "Bounding" warrior to fury. The same nervous excitability which rendered him so active in his person, made it difficult to repress his feelings, and the words were scarcely past the lips of the speaker than the tomahawk left the hand of the Indian. Nor was it cast without good-will, and a fierce determination to slay. Had the intention been less deadly, the danger might have been greater. The aim was uncertain, and the weapon glanced near the cheek of the captive, slightly cutting the shoulder in its evolutions. This was the first instance in which any other object, than that of terrifying the prisoner, and of displaying skill had been manifested; and the Bounding Boy was immediately led from the arena, and was warmly rebuked for his intemperate haste, which had come so near defeating all the hopes of the band.

To this irritable person succeeded several other young warriors, who not only hurled the tomahawk but who cast the knife, a far more dangerous experiment, with reckless indifference; yet they always manifested a skill that prevented any injury to the captive. Several times Deerslayer was grazed, but in no instance did he receive what might be termed a wound. The unflinching firmness with which he faced his assailants, more especially in the sort of rally with which this trial terminated, excited a profound respect in the spectators; and when the chiefs announced that the prisoner had well withstood the trial of the knife and the tomahawk, there was not a single individual in the band who really felt any hostility towards him, with the exception of Sumach and the Bounding Boy. These two discontented spirits got together it is true, feeding each other's ire; but, as yet, their malignant feelings were confined very much to themselves, though there existed the danger that the others ere long could not fail to be excited by their own efforts into that demoniacal state which usually accompanied all similar scenes among the red-men.

Rivenoak now told his people that the pale-face had proved himself to be a man. He might live with the Delawares, but he had not been made woman with that tribe. He wished to know

whether it was the desire of the Hurons to proceed any further. Even the gentlest of the females, however, had received too much satisfaction in the late trials to forego their expectations of a gratifying exhibition; and there was but one voice in the request to proceed. The politic chief, who had some such desire to receive so celebrated a hunter into his tribe as a European minister has to desire a new and available means of taxation, sought every plausible means of arresting the trial in season; for he well knew, if permitted to go far enough to arouse the more ferocious passions of the tormentors, it would be as easy to dam the waters of the great lakes of his own region as to attempt to arrest them in their bloody career. He therefore called four or five of the best marksmen to him, and bid them put the captive to the proof of the rifle, while at the same time, he cautioned them touching the necessity of their maintaining their own credit, by the closest attention to the manner of exhibiting their skill.

When Deerslayer saw the chosen warriors step into the circle, with their arms prepared for service, he felt some such relief as the miserable sufferer, who has long endured the agonies of disease, feels at the certain approach of death. Any trifling variance in the aim of this formidable weapon would prove fatal; since the head being

the target, or rather the point it was desired to graze without injury, an inch or two of difference in the line of projection, must at once determine the question of life or death.

In the torture by the rifle there was none of the latitude permitted that appeared in the case of even Gesler's apple, a hair's-breadth being in fact the utmost limits that an expert marksman would allow himself on an occasion like this. Victims were frequently shot through the head by too eager or unskilful hands; and it often occurred that, exasperated by the fortitude and taunts of the prisoner, death was dealt intentionally in a moment of ungovernable irritation. All this Deerslayer well knew, for it was in relating the traditions of such scenes as well as of the battles and victories of their people, that the old men beguiled the long winter evenings in their cabins. He now fully expected the end of his career, and experienced a sort of melancholy pleasure in the idea that he was to fall by a weapon as much beloved as the rifle. A slight interruption, however, took place before the business was allowed to proceed.

Hetty Hutter witnessed all that passed, and the scene at first had passed upon her feeble mind in a way to paralyze it entirely; but, by this time she had rallied, and was growing indignant at the

unmerited suffering the Indians were inflicting on her friend. Though timid, and shy as the young of the deer, on so many occasions, this right-feeling girl was always intrepid in the cause of humanity; the lessons of her mother, and the impulses of her own heart,—perhaps we might say the promptings of that unseen and pure spirit that seemed ever to watch over and direct her actions—uniting to keep down the apprehensions of woman, and to impel her to be bold and resolute. She now appeared in the circle, gentle, feminine, even bashful in mien, as usual, but earnest in her words and countenance, speaking like one who knew herself to be sustained by the high authority of God.

"Why do you torment Deerslayer, red men?" she asked. "What has he done that you trifle with his life; who has given you the right to be his judges? Suppose one of your knives, or tomahawks had hit him; what Indian among you all could cure the wound you would make. Besides, in harming Deerslayer, you injure your own friend; when father and Hurry Harry came after your scalps, he refused to be of the party, and staid in the canoe by himself. You are tormenting your friend in tormenting this young man!"

The Hurons listened with grave attention, and

one among them, who understood English, translated what had been siad into their native tongue. As soon as Rivenoak was made acquainted with the purport of her address, he answered it in his own dialect; the interpreter conveying it to the girl in English.

"My daughter is very welcome to speak," said the stern old orator, using gentle intonations and smiling as kindly as if addressing a child—"the Hurons are glad to hear her voice; they listen to what she says. The Great Spirit often speaks to men with such tongues. This time her eyes have not been open wide enough to see all that has happened. Deerslayer did not come for our scalps, that is true; why did he not come? Here they are, on our heads; the warlocks are ready to be taken hold of; a bold enemy ought to stretch out his hand to seize them. The Iroquois are too great a nation to punish men that take scalps. What they do themselves they like to see others do. Let my daughter look around her and count my warriors. Had I as many hands as four warriors, their fingers would be fewer than my people, when they came into your hunting-grounds. Now, a whole hand is missing. Where are the fingers? Two have been cut off by this pale-face; my Hurons wish to see if he did this by means of a stout heart, or by treachery; like a skulking fox, or like a leaping panther."

"You know yourself, Huron, how one of them fell. I saw it, and you all saw it, too. 'T was too bloody to look at; but it was not Deerslayer's fault. Your warrior sought his life, and he defended himself. I don't know whether the good book says that it was right, but all men will do that. Come, if you want to know which of you can shoot best, give Deerslayer a rifle, and then you will find how much more expert he is than any of your warriors; yes, than *all* of them together!"

Could one have looked upon such a scene with indifference, he would have been amused at the gravity with which the savages listened to the translation of this unusual request. No taunt, no smile mingled with their surprise; for Hetty had a character and manner too saintly to subject her infirmity to the mockings of the rude and ferocious. On the contrary, she was answered with respectful attention.

"My daughter does not always talk like a chief at a council-fire," returned Rivenoak, "or she would not have said this. Two of my warriors have fallen by the blows of our prisoner; their grave is too small to hold a third. The Hurons do not like to crowd their dead. If there is another spirit about to set out for the far-off world, it must not be the spirit of a Huron; it must be the spirit of a pale-face. Go, daughter, and sit

by Sumach, who is in grief; let the Huron warriors show how well they can shoot; let the pale-face show how little he cares for their bullets."

Hetty's mind was unequal to a sustained discussion, and, accustomed to defer to the directions of her seniors, she did as told, seating herself passively on a log by the side of the Sumach, and averting her face from the painful scene that was occurring within the circle.

The warriors, as soon as this interruption had ceased, resumed their places, and again prepared to exhibit their skill, as there was a double object in view, that of putting the constancy of the captive to the proof, and that of showing how steady were the hands of the marksmen under circumstances of excitement. The distance was small, and, in one sense, safe. But in diminishing the distance taken by the tormentors, the trial to the nerves of the captive was essentially increased. The face of Deerslayer, indeed, was just removed sufficiently from the ends of the guns to escape the effects of the flash, and his steady eye was enabled to look directly into their muzzles, as it might be, in anticipation of the fatal messenger that was to issue from each. The cunning Hurons well knew this fact; and scarce one levelled his piece without first causing it to point as near as possible at the forehead of the prisoner

in the hope that his fortitude would fail him, and that the band would enjoy the triumph of seeing a victim quail under their ingenious cruelty. Nevertheless, each of the competitors were still careful not to injure, the disgrace of striking prematurely being second only to that of failing altogether in attaining the object. Shot after shot was made; all the bullets coming in close proximity to the Deerslayer's head, without touching it. Still no one could detect even the twitching of a muscle on the part of the captive, or the slightest winking of an eye. This indomitable resolution, which so much exceeded every thing of its kind that any present had before witnessed, might be referred to three distinct causes. The first was resignation to his fate, blended with natural steadiness of deportment; for our hero had calmly made up his mind that he must die, and preferred this mode to any other; the second was his great familiarity to this particular weapon, which deprived it of all the terror that is usually connected with the mere form of the danger; and the third was this familiarity carried out in practice, to a degree so nice as to enable the intended victim to tell, within an inch, the precise spot where each bullet must strike, for he calculated its range by looking in at the bore of the piece. So exact was Deerslayer's

estimation of the line of fire, that his pride of feeling finally got the better of his resignation, and, when five or six had discharged their bullets into the tree, he could not refrain from expressing his contempt at their want of hand and eye.

"You may call this shooting, Mingos," he exclaimed, "but we've squaws among the Delawares, and I've known Dutch gals on the Mohawk, that could outdo your greatest indivours. Ondo these arms of mine, put a rifle in my hands, and I'll pin the thinnest warlock in your party to any tree you can show me; and this at a hundred yards; ay, or at two hundred, if the object can be seen, nineteen shots in twenty; or for that matter, twenty in twenty, if the piece is creditable and trusty!"

A low menacing murmur followed this cool taunt; the ire of the warriors kindled at listening to such a reproach from one who so far disdained their efforts as to refuse even to wink, when a rifle was discharged as near his face as could be done without burning it. Rivenoak perceived that the moment was critical, and still retaining his hope of adopting so noted a hunter in his tribe, the politic old chief interposed in time, probably, to prevent an immediate resort to that portion of the torture which must necessarily have produced death, through extreme bodily

suffering, if in no other manner. Moving into the centre of the irritated group, he addressed them with his usual wily logic and plausible manner, at once suppressing the fierce movement that had commenced.

"I see how it is," he said. "We have been like the pale-faces when they fasten their doors at night out of fear of the red-man. They use so many bars, that the fire comes and burns them, before they can get out. We have bound the Deerslayer too tight; the thongs keep his limbs from shaking, and his eyes from shutting. Loosen him; let us see what his own body is really made of."

It is often the case, when we are thwarted in a cherished scheme, that any expedient, however unlikely to succeed, is gladly resorted to, in preference to a total abandonment of the project. So it was with the Hurons. The proposal of the chief found instant favour; and several hands were immediately at work, cutting and tearing the ropes of bark from the body of our hero. In half a minute, Deerslayer stood as free from bonds, as when, an hour before, he had commenced flight on the side of the mountain. Some little time was necessary that he should recover the use of his limbs; the circulation of the blood having been checked by the tightness of the ligatures;

and this was accorded to him by the politic Rivenoak, under the pretence that his body would be more likely to submit to apprehension, if its true tone were restored; though really with a view to give time to the fierce passions which had been awakened in the bosoms of his young men to subside. This *ruse* succeeded; and Deerslayer, by rubbing his limbs, stamping his feet, and moving about, soon regained the circulation;—recovering all his physical powers, as effectually as if nothing had occurred to disturb them.

It is seldom men think of death in the pride of their health and strength. So it was with Deerslayer. Having been helplessly bound, and, as he had every reason to suppose, so lately on the very verge of the other world, to find himself so unexpectedly liberated, in possession of his strength, and with a full command of limb, acted on him like a sudden restoration to life, reanimating hopes that he had once absolutely abandoned. From that instant all his plans changed. In this, he simply obeyed a law of nature; for while we have wished to represent our hero as being resigned to his fate, it has been far from our intention to represent him as anxious to die. From the instant that his buoyancy of feeling revived, his thoughts were keenly bent on the

various projects that presented themselves as modes of evading the designs of his enemies; and he again became the quick-witted, ingenious, and determined woodsman, alive to all his own powers and resources. The change was so great that his mind resumed its elasticity; and no longer thinking of submission, it dwelt only on the devices of the sort of warfare in which he was engaged.

As soon as Deerslayer was released, the band divided itself in a circle around him, in order to hedge him in; and the desire to break down his spirit grew in them, precisely as they saw proofs of the difficulty there would be in subduing it. The honour of the band was now involved in the issue; and even the sex lost all its sympathy with suffering, in the desire to save the reputation of the tribe. The voices of the girls, soft and melodious as nature had made them, were heard mingling with the menaces of the men; and the wrongs of Sumach suddenly assumed the character of injuries inflicted on every Huron female. Yielding to this rising tumult, the men drew back a little; signifying to the females, that they left the captive for a time in their hands; it being a common practice, on such occasions, for the women to endeavour to throw the victim into a rage by their taunts and revilings, and then to

turn him suddenly over to the men in a state of mind that was little favourable to resisting the agony of bodily suffering. Nor was this party without the proper instruments for effecting such a purpose. Sumach had a notoriety as a scold; and one or two crones, like the She Bear, had come out with the party, most probably as the conservators of its decency and moral discipline; such things occurring in savage as well as civilized life. It is unnecessary to repeat all that ferocity and ignorance could invent for such a purpose; the only difference between this outbreaking of feminine anger, and a similar scene among ourselves, consisting in the figures of speech and the epithets; the Huron women calling their prisoner by the names of the lower and least respected animals that were known to themselves.

But Deerslayer's mind was too much occupied to permit him to be disturbed by the abuse of excited hags; and their rage necessarily increasing with his indifference, as his indifference increased with their rage, the furies soon rendered themselves impotent by their own excesses. Perceiving that the attempt was a complete failure, the warriors interfered to put a stop to this scene; and this so much the more, because preparations were now seriously making for the commencement of the real tortures, or that which would put the forti-

tude of the sufferer to the test of severe bodily pain. A sudden and unlooked-for announcement, that proceeded from one of the look-outs, a boy of ten or twelve years old, however, put a momentary check to the whole proceedings. As this interruption has a close connection with the *dénouement* of our story, it shall be given in a separate chapter.

CHAPTER X.

"So deem'st thou—so each mortal deems
Of that which is from that which seems;
But other harvest here
Than that which peasant's scythe demands,
Was gathered in by sterner hands,
With bayonet, blade, and spear."

SCOTT.

It exceeded Deerslayer's power to ascertain what had produced the sudden pause in the movements of his enemies, until the fact was revealed in the due course of events. He perceived that much agitation prevailed among the women in particular, while the warriors rested on their arms in a sort of dignified expectation. It was plain no alarm was excited, though it was not equally apparent that a friendly occurrence produced the delay. Rivenoak was evidently apprised of all, and by a gesture of his arm he appeared to direct the circle to remain unbroken, and for each person to await the issue in the situation he, or she, then occupied. It required but a minute or two to bring an explanation of

this singular and mysterious pause, which was soon terminated by the appearance of Judith, on the exterior of the line of bodies, and her ready admission within its circle.

If Deerslayer was startled by this unexpected arrival, well knowing that the quick-witted girl could claim none of that exemption from the penalties of captivity, that was so cheerfully accorded to her feeble-minded sister, he was equally astonished at the guise in which she came. All her ordinary forest attire, neat and becoming as this usually was, had been laid aside for the brocade, that has been already mentioned, and which had once before wrought so great and magical an effect in her appearance. Nor was this all. Accustomed to see the ladies of the garrison, in the formal, gala attire of the day, and familiar with the more critical niceties of these matters, the girl had managed to complete her dress, in a way to leave nothing strikingly defective in its details, or even to betray an incongruity that would have been detected by one practised in the mysteries of the toilet. Head, feet, arms, hands, bust, and drapery, were all in harmony, as female attire was then deemed attractive and harmonious; and the end she aimed at, that of imposing on the uninstructed senses of the savages, by causing them to believe

their guest was a woman of rank and importance, might well have succeeded with those whose habits had taught them to discriminate between persons. Judith, in addition to her rare native beauty, had a singular grace of person, and her mother had imparted enough of her own deportment, to prevent any striking or offensive vulgarity of manner; so that, sooth to say, the gorgeous dress might have been worse bestowed in nearly every particular. Had it been displayed in a capital, a thousand might have worn it, before one could have been found to do more credit to its gay colours, glossy satins, and rich laces, than the beautiful creature whose person it now aided to adorn.

The effect of such an apparition had not been miscalculated. The instant Judith found herself within the circle, she was, in a degree, compensated for the fearful personal risk she ran, by the unequivocal sensation of surprise and admiration produced by her appearance. The grim old warriors uttered their favourite exclamation, "Hugh!" The younger men were still more sensibly overcome, and even the women were not backward in letting open manifestations of pleasure escape them. It was seldom that these untutored children of the forest had ever seen any white female above the commonest sort, and as

to dress, never before had so much splendour shone before their eyes. The gayest uniforms of both French and English seemed dull, compared with the lustre of the brocade ; and while the rare personal beauty of the wearer added to the effect produced by its hues, the attire did not fail to adorn that beauty in a way which surpassed even the hopes of its wearer. Deerslayer himself was astounded, and this quite as much by the brilliant picture the girl presented, as at the indifference to consequences with which she had braved the danger of the step she had taken. Under such circumstances, all waited for the visiter to explain her object, which to most of the spectators seemed as inexplicable as her appearance.

" Which of these warriors is the principal chief?" demanded Judith of Deerslayer, as soon as she found it was expected that she should open the communication ; " my errand is too important to be delivered to any of inferior rank. First explain to the Hurons what I say; then give an answer to the question I have put."

Deerslayer quietly complied, his auditors greedily listening to the interpretation of the first words that fell from so extraordinary a vision. The demand seemed perfectly in character for one who had every appearance of an exalted rank herself. Rivenoak gave an appropriate reply, by

presenting himself before his fair visiter in a way to leave no doubt that he was entitled to all the consideration he claimed.

"I can believe this Huron," resumed Judith, enacting her assumed part with a steadiness and dignity that did credit to her powers of imitation, for she strove to impart to her manner the condescending courtesy she had once observed in the wife of a general officer at a similar, though a more amicable scene: "I can believe you to be the principal person of this party; I see in your countenance the marks of thought and reflection. To you, then, I must make my communication."

"Let the Flower of the Woods speak," returned the old chief, courteously, as soon as her address had been translated so that all might understand it. "If her words are as pleasant as her looks, they will never quit my ears; I shall hear them long after the winter of Canada has killed the flowers, and frozen all the speeches of summer."

This admiration was grateful to one constituted like Judith, and it contributed to aid her self-possession, quite as much as it fed her vanity. Smiling involuntarily, or in spite of her wish to seem reserved, she proceeded in her plot.

"Now, Huron," she continued, "listen to my words. Your eyes tell you that I am no common woman. I will not say I am the queen of this

country; *she* is afar off, in a distant land; but under our gracious monarchs, there are many degrees of rank: one of these I fill. What that rank is precisely, it is unnecessary for me to say, since you would not understand it. For that information you must trust your eyes. You *see* what I am; you must *feel* that in listening to my words, you listen to one who can be your friend, or your enemy, as you treat her."

This was well uttered, with a due attention to manner, and a steadiness of tone, that was really surprising, considering all the circumstances of the case. It was well, though simply rendered into the Indian dialect, too, and it was received with a respect and gravity that augured favourably for the girl's success. But Indian thought is not easily traced to its sources. Judith waited with anxiety to hear the answer, filled with hope even while she doubted. Rivenoak was a ready speaker, and he answered as promptly as comported with the notions of Indian decorum; that peculiar people seeming to think a short delay respectful, inasmuch as it manifests that the words already heard, have been duly weighed.

"My daughter is handsomer than the wild roses of Ontario; her voice is pleasant to the ear as the song of the wren," answered the cautious and wily chief, who of all the band stood alone in not

being fully imposed on by the magnificent and unusual appearance of Judith; but who distrusted even while he wondered: "the humming bird is not much larger than the bee; yet its feathers are as gay as the tail of the peacock. The Great Spirit sometimes puts very bright clothes on very little animals. Still, He covers the moose with coarse hair. These things are beyond the understanding of poor Indians, who can only comprehend what they see and hear. No doubt my daughter has a very large wigwam, somewhere about the lake; the Hurons have not found it, on account of their ignorance?"

"I have told you, chief, that it would be useless to state my rank and residence, inasmuch as you would not comprehend them. You must trust to your eyes for this knowledge; what red-man is there who cannot see? This blanket that I wear, is not the blanket of a common squaw; these ornaments are such as the wives and daughters of chiefs only appear in. Now, listen and hear why I have come alone, among your people, and hearken to the errand that has brought me here. The Yengeese have young men, as well as the Hurons; and plenty of them, too; this you well know."

"The Yengeese are as plenty as the leaves on the trees! This every Huron knows and feels."

"I understand you, chief. Had I brought a party with me, it might have caused trouble. My young men and your young men would have looked angrily at each other; especially had my young men seen that pale-face bound for the tortures. He is a great hunter, and is much loved by all the garrisons, far and near. There would have been blows about him, and the trail of the Iroquois back to the Canadas would have been marked with blood."

"There is so much blood on it, now," returned the chief, gloomily, "that it blinds our eyes. My young men see that it is all Huron."

"No doubt; and more Huron blood would be spilt, had I come surrounded with pale-faces. I have heard of Rivenoak, and have thought it would be better to send him back in peace to his village, that he might leave his women and children behind him; if he then wished to come for our scalps, we would meet him. He loves animals made of ivory, and little rifles. See; I have brought some with me to show him. I am his friend. When he has packed up these things among his goods, he will start for his village, before any of my young men can overtake him; and then he will show his people in Canada what riches they can come to seek, now that our great fathers, across the Salt Lake have sent each

other the war-hatchet. I will lead back with me this great hunter, of whom I have need to keep my house in venison."

Judith, who was sufficiently familiar with Indian phraseology, endeavoured to express her ideas in the sententious manner common to those people; and she succeeded even beyond her own expectations. Deerslayer did her full justice in the translation, and this so much the more readily, since the girl carefully abstained from uttering any direct untruth; a homage she paid to the young man's known aversion to falsehood, which he deemed a meanness altogether unworthy of a white man's gifts. The offering of the two remaining elephants, and of the pistols already mentioned, one of which was all the worse for the recent accident, produced a lively sensation among the Hurons, generally, though Rivenoak received it coldly, notwithstanding the delight with which he had first discovered the probable existence of a creature with two tails. In a word, this cool and sagacious savage was not so easily imposed on, as his followers; and with a sentiment of honour, that half the civilized world would have deemed supererogatory, he declined the acceptance of a bribe that he felt no disposition to earn by a compliance with the donor's wishes.

"Let my daughter keep her two-tailed hog to eat, when venison is scarce," he drily answered;

"and the little gun with two muzzles. The Hurons will kill deer when they are hungry; and they have long rifles to fight with. This hunter cannot quit my young men now; they wish to know if he is as stout-hearted as he boasts himself to be."

"That I deny, Huron," interrupted Deerslayer, with warmth; "yes, that I downright deny, as ag'in truth and reason. No man has heard me *boast*, and no man shall, though ye flay me alive, and then roast the quivering flesh, with your own infarnal devices and cruelties! I may be humble, and misfortunate, and your prisoner; but I 'm no boaster, by my very gifts."

"My young pale-face *boasts* he is *no* boaster," returned the crafty chief; "he *must* be right. I hear a strange bird singing. It has very rich feathers. No Huron ever before saw such feathers! They will be ashamed to go back to their village, and tell their people that they let their prisoner go on account of the song of this strange bird, and not be able to give the *name* of the bird. They do not know how to say whether it is a wren, or a cat-bird. This would be a great disgrace; my young men would not be allowed to travel in the woods, without taking their mothers with them, to tell them the name of the birds!"

"You can ask my name of your prisoner,"

returned the girl. "It is Judith; and there is a great deal of the history of Judith in the pale-face's best book, the Bible. If I am a bird of fine feathers, I have also my name."

"No," answered the wily Huron, betraying the artifice he had so long practised, by speaking in English, with tolerably accuracy; "I not ask prisoner. He tired; want rest. I ask my daughter, with feeble-mind. She speak truth. Come here, daughter; you answer. *Your* name, Hetty?"

"Yes, that's what they call me," returned the girl; "though it's written Esther, in the Bible."

"He write *him* in Bible, too! All write in Bible. No matter—what *her* name?"

"That's Judith, and it's so written in the Bible, though father sometimes called her Jude. That's my sister Judith, Thomas Hutter's daughter—Thomas Hutter, whom you called the Muskrat; though he was *no* muskrat, but a man, like yourselves—he lived in a house on the water, and that was enough for *you!*"

A smile of triumph gleamed on the hard-wrinkled countenance of the chief, when he found how completely his appeal to the truth-loving Hetty had succeeded. As for Judith, herself, the moment her sister was questioned, she saw that

all was lost; for no sign, or even en[illegible] have induced the right-feeling girl to utter a falsehood. To attempt to impose a daughter of the Muskrat on the savages, as a princess, or a great lady, she knew would be idle; and she saw her bold and ingenious expedient for liberating the captive fail, through one of the simplest and most natural causes that could be imagined. She turned her eye on Deerslayer, therefore, as if imploring him to interfere, to save them both.

"It will not do, Judith," said the young man, in answer to this appeal, which he understood, though he saw its uselessness; "it will not do. 'Twas a bold idee, and fit for a general's lady; but yonder Mingo—" Rivenoak had withdrawn to a little distance, and was out of ear-shot—"but yonder Mingo is an oncommon man, and not to be deceived by any unnat'ral sarcumventions. Things must come afore him in their right order, to draw a cloud afore *his* eyes! 'Twas too much to attempt making him fancy that a queen or a great lady lived in these mountains; and no doubt he thinks the fine clothes you wear, are some of the plunder of your own father—or, at least, of him who once passed for your father; as quite likely it was, if all they say is true."

"At all events, Deerslayer, my presence here

will save you for a time. They will hardly attempt torturing you before my face!"

"Why not, Judith? Do you think they will treat a woman of the pale-faces more tenderly than they treat their own? It's true that your sex will most likely save you from the torments but it will not save your liberty, and may not save your scalp. I wish you hadn't come, my good Judith; it can't do no good to me, while it may do great harm to yourself."

"I can share your fate," the girl answered, with generous enthusiasm. "They shall not injure you, while I stand by, if in my power to prevent it—besides——"

"Besides what, Judith? What means have you to stop Indian cruelty, or to avart Indian deviltries?"

"None, perhaps, Deerslayer," answered the girl, with firmness; "but I can suffer with my friends—die with them if necessary."

"Ah! Judith—suffer you may; but die you will not, until the Lord's time shall come. It's little likely that one of your sex and beauty will meet with a harder fate than to become the wife of a chief, if indeed your white inclinations can stoop to match with an Indian. 'Twould have been better had you staid in the ark, or the castle:—but

what has been done, is done. You was about to say something, when you stopped at 'besides?'"

"It might not be safe to mention it here, Deerslayer," the girl hurriedly answered, moving past him carelessly, that she might speak in a low tone; "half an hour is all in all to us. None of your friends are idle."

The hunter replied merely by a grateful look. Then he turned towards his enemies, as if ready again to face the torments. A short consultation had passed among the elders of the band, and by this time, they also were prepared with their decision. The merciful purpose of Rivenoak had been much weakened by the artifice of Judith, which, failing of its real object, was likely to produce results the very opposite of those she had anticipated. This was natural; the feeling being aided by the resentment of an Indian, who found how near he had been to becoming the dupe of an inexperienced girl. By this time Judith's real character was fully understood—the wide-spread reputation of her beauty contributing to the exposure. As for the unusual attire, it was confounded with the profound mystery of the animals with two tails, and, for the moment, lost its influence.

When Rivenoak, therefore, faced the captive again, it was with an altered countenance. He

had abandoned the wish of saving him, and was no longer disposed to retard the more serious part of the torture. This change of sentiment was, in effect, communicated to the young men, who were already eagerly engaged in making their preparations for the contemplated scene. Fragments of dried wood were rapidly collected near the sapling—the splinters which it was intended to thrust into the flesh of the victim previously to lighting were all collected, and the thongs were already produced that were again to bind him to the tree. All this was done in profound silence, Judith watching every movement with breathless expectation, while Deerslayer himself stood seemingly as unmoved, as one of the pines of the hills. When the warriors advanced to bind him, however, the young man glanced at Judith as if to inquire whether resistance or submission were most advisable. By a significant gesture she counselled the last; and, in a minute, he was once more fastened to the tree, a helpless object of any insult or wrong that might be offered. So eagerly did every one now act, that nothing was said. The fire was immediately lighted in the pile, and the end of all was anxiously expected.

It was not the intention of the Hurons absolutely to destroy the life of their victim by means of fire. They designed merely to put his

physical fortitude to the severest proofs it could endure short of that extremity. In the end, they fully intended to carry his scalp with them into their village, but it was their wish first to break down his resolution, and to reduce him to the level of a complaining sufferer. With this view, the pile of brush and branches had been placed at a proper distance, or one at which it was thought the heat would soon become intolerable, though it might not be immediately dangerous. As often happened, however, on these occasions, this distance had been miscalculated, and the flames began to wave their forked tongues in a proximity to the face of the victim that would have proved fatal in another instant, had not Hetty rushed through the crowd, armed with a stick, and scattered the blazing pile in a dozen directions. More than one hand was raised to strike the presumptuous intruder to the earth; but the chiefs prevented the blows, by reminding their irritated followers of the state of her mind. Hetty, herself was insensible to the risk she ran, but as soon as she had performed this bold act, she stood looking about her, in frowning resentment, as if to rebuke the crowd of attentive savages for their cruelty.

"God bless you, dearest sister, for that brave and ready act!" murmured Judith, herself unnerved so much as to be incapable of exertion;

"Heaven itself has send you on its holy errand."

"'T was well-meant, Judith," rejoined the victim; "'t was excellently meant, and 'twas timely, though it may prove ontimely in the end! What is to come to pass must come to pass soon, or 't will quickly be too late. Had I drawn in one mouthful of that flame in breathing, the power of man couldn't save my life; and you see that, this time, they've so bound my forehead as not to leave my head the smallest chance. 'T was well meant; but it might have been more marciful to let the flames act their part."

"Cruel, heartless Hurons!" exclaimed the still indignant Hetty; "would you burn a man and a Christian, as you would burn a log of wood! Do you never read your Bibles? or do you think God will forget such things?"

A gesture from Rivenoak caused the scattered brands to be collected; fresh wood was brought, even the women and children busying themselves eagerly in the gathering of dried sticks. The flame was just kindling a second time, when an *Indian* female pushed through the circle, advanced to the heap, and, with her foot, dashed aside the lighted twigs, in time to prevent the conflagration. A yell followed this second disappointment; but when the offender turned towards the circle, and

presented the countenance of Hist, it was succeeded by a common exclamation of pleasure and surprise. For a minute all thought of pursuing the business in hand was forgotten, and young and old crowded around the girl, in haste, to demand an explanation of her sudden and unlooked-for return. It was at this critical instant that Hist spoke to Judith in a low voice, placed some small object, unseen, in her hand, and then turned to meet the salutations of the Huron girls, with whom she was personally a great favourite. Judith recovered her self-possession, and acted promptly. The small, keen-edged knife, that Hist had given to the other, was passed by the latter into the hands of Hetty, as the safest and least-suspected medium of transferring it to Deerslayer. But the feeble intellect of the latter defeated the well-grounded hopes of all three. Instead of first cutting loose the hands of the victim, and then concealing the knife in his clothes, in readiness for action at the most available instant, she went to work herself with earnestness and simplicity to cut the thongs that bound his head, that he might not again be in danger of inhaling flames. Of course this deliberate procedure was seen; and the hands of Hetty were arrested ere she had more than liberated the upper portion of the captive's body, not including his arms, below the elbows. This discovery at once pointed distrust towards

Hist; and, to Judith's surprise, when questioned on the subject, that spirited girl was not disposed to deny her agency in what had passed.

"Why should I not help the Deerslayer?" the girl demanded, in the tones of a firm-minded woman. "He is the brother of a Delaware chief; my heart is all Delaware. Come forth, miserable Briarthorn, and wash the Iroquois paint from your face; stand before the Hurons, the crow that you are; you would eat the carrion of your own dead, rather than starve. Put him face to face with Deerslayer, chiefs and warriors; I will show you how great a knave you have been keeping in your tribe."

This bold language, uttered in their own dialect, and with a manner full of confidence, produced a deep sensation among the Hurons. Treachery is always liable to distrust; and, though the recreant Briarthorn had endeavoured to serve the enemy well, his exertions and assiduities had gained for him little more than toleration. His wish to obtain Hist for a wife had first induced him to betray her and his own people; but serious rivals to his first project had risen up among his new friends, weakening still more their sympathies with treason. In a word, Briarthorn had been barely permitted to remain in the Huron encampment, where he was as closely and as

jealously watched as Hist herself; seldom appearing before the chiefs, and sedulously keeping out of view of Deerslayer, who, until this moment, was ignorant even of his presence. Thus summoned, however, it was impossible to remain in the back-ground. "Wash the Iroquois paint from his face," he did not; for when he stood in the centre of the circle, he was so disguised in these new colours, that, at first, the hunter did not recognise him. He assumed an air of defiance, notwithstanding, and haughtily demanded what any could say against "Briarthorn."

"Ask yourself that," continued Hist, with spirit, though her manner grew less concentrated; and there was a slight air of abstraction that became observable to Deerslayer and Judith, if to no others. "Ask that of your own heart, sneaking wood-chuck of the Delawares; come not here with the face of an innocent man. Go look in the spring; see the colours of your enemies on your lying skin; then come back and boast how you ran from your tribe, and took the blanket of the French for your covering! Paint yourself as bright as the humming-bird, you will still be black as the crow."

Hist had been so uniformly gentle, while living with the Hurons, that they now listened to her language with surprise. As for the delinquent,

his blood boiled in his veins; and it was well for the pretty speaker that it was not in his power to execute the revenge he burned to inflict on her, in spite of his pretended love.

"Who wishes Briarthorn?" he sternly asked. "If this pale-face is tired of life; if afraid of Indian torments, speak, Rivenoak; I will send him after the warriors we have lost."

"No, chief; no, Rivenoak," eagerly interrupted Hist. "Deerslayer fears nothing; least of all, a crow! Unbind him—cut his withes—place him face to face with this cawing bird; then let us see which is tired of life."

Hist made a forward movement, as if to take a knife from a young man, and perform the office she had mentioned, in person; but an aged warrior interposed, at a sign from Rivenoak. This chief watched all the girl did, with distrust; for, even while speaking in her most boastful language, and in the steadiest manner, there was an air of uncertainty and expectation about her, that could not escape so close an observer. She acted well; but two or three of the old men were equally satisfied that it was merely acting. Her proposal to release Deerslayer, therefore, was rejected; and the disappointed Hist found herself driven back from the sapling at the very moment she fancied herself about to be successful. At

the same time, the circle, which had got to be crowded and confused, was enlarged, and brought once more into order. Rivenoak now announced the intention of the old men again to proceed; the delay having been continued long enough, and leading to no result.

"Stop, Huron; stay, chiefs!" exclaimed Judith, scarce knowing what she said, or why she interposed, unless to obtain time; "for God's sake, a single minute longer—"

The words were cut short, by another and a still more extraordinary interruption. A young Indian came bounding through the Huron ranks, leaping into the very centre of the circle, in a way to denote the utmost confidence, or a temerity bordering on fool-hardiness. Five or six sentinels were still watching the lake, at different and distant points; and it was the first impression of Rivenoak that one of these had come in, with tidings of import. Still, the movements of the stranger were so rapid, and his war-dress, which scarcely left him more drapery than an antique statue, had so little distinguishing about it, that, at the first moment, it was impossible to ascertain whether he were friend or foe. Three leaps carried this warrior to the side of Deerslayer, whose withes were cut in the twinkling of an eye, with a quickness and precision that left the

prisoner perfect master of his limbs. Not till this was effected, did the stranger bestow a glance on any other object; then he turned, and showed the astonished Hurons the noble brow, fine person, and eagle eye, of a young warrior, in the paint and panoply of a Delaware. He held a rifle in each hand, the butts of both resting on the earth, while from one dangled its proper pouch and horn. This was Killdeer, which, even as he looked boldly and in defiance on the crowd around him, he suffered to fall back into the hands of its proper owner. The presence of two armed men, though it was in their midst, startled the Hurons. Their rifles were scattered about against the different trees, and their only weapons were their knives and tomahawks. Still, they had too much self-possession to betray fear. It was little likely that so small a force would assail so strong a band; and each man expected some extraordinary proposition to succeed so decisive a step. The stranger did not seem disposed to disappoint them; he prepared to speak.

"Hurons," he said, "this earth is very big The great lakes are big, too; there is room beyond them for the Iroquois; there is room for the Delawares on this side. I am Chingachgook, the son of Uncas; the kinsman of Tamenund. This is my betrothed; that pale-face is my friend.

My heart was heavy when I missed him; I followed him to your camp, to see that no harm happened to him. All the Delaware girls are waiting for Wah! they wonder that she stays away so long. Come, let us say farewell, and go on our path."

"Hurons, this is your mortal enemy, the Great Serpent of them you hate!" cried Briarthorn. "If he escape, blood will be in your moccasin prints, from this spot to the Canadas. *I* am *all* Huron!"

As the last words were uttered, the traitor cast his knife at the naked breast of the Delaware. A quick movement of the arm on the part of Hist, who stood near, turned aside the blow, the dangerous weapon burying its point in a pine. At the next instant, a similar weapon glanced from the hand of the Serpent, and quivered in the recreant's heart. A minute had scarcely elapsed from the moment in which Chingachgook bounded into the circle, and that in which Briarthorn fell, like a log, dead in his tracks. The rapidity of events had prevented the Hurons from acting; but this catastrophe permitted no farther delay. A common exclamation followed, and the whole party was in motion. At this instant, a sound unusual to the woods was heard, and every Huron, male and female, paused to listen,

with ears erect and faces filled with expectation. The sound was regular and heavy, as if the earth were struck with beetles. Objects became visible among the trees of the back-ground, and a body of troops was seen advancing with measured tread. They came upon the charge, the scarlet of the king's livery shining among the bright green foliage of the forests.

The scene that followed is not easily described. It was one in which wild confusion, despair, and frenzied efforts were so blended, as to destroy the unity and distinctness of the action. A general yell burst from the enclosed Hurons; it was succeeded by the hearty cheers of England. Still, not a musket or rifle was fired, though that steady, measured tramp continued, and the bayonet was seen gleaming in advance of a line that counted nearly sixty men. The Hurons were taken at a fearful disadvantage. On three sides was the water, while their formidable and trained foes cut them off from flight on the fourth. Each warrior rushed for his arms, and then all on the point, man, woman, and child, eagerly sought the covers. In this scene of confusion and dismay, however, nothing could surpass the discretion and coolness of Deerslayer. His first care was to place Judith and Hist behind trees, and he looked for Hetty; but she had been

hurried away in a crowd of Huron women. This effected, he threw himself on a flank of the retiring Hurons, who were inclining off towards the southern margin of the point, in the hope of escaping through the water. Deerslayer watched his opportunity, and finding two of his recent tormentors in a range, his rifle first broke the silence of the terrific scene. The bullet brought both down at one discharge. This drew a general fire from the Hurons, and the rifle and war-cry of the Serpent were heard in the clamour. Still the trained men returned no answering volley, the whoop and piece of Hurry alone being heard on their side, if we except the short, prompt word of authority, and that heavy, measured, and menacing tread. Presently, however, the shrieks, groans, and denunciations that usually accompany the use of the bayonet, followed. That terrible and deadly weapon was glutted in vengeance. The scene that succeeded was one of those, of which so many have occurred in our own times, in which neither age nor sex forms an exemption to the lot of a savage warfare.

CHAPTER XI.

"The flower that smiles to-day,
To-morrow dies;
All that we wish to stay,
Tempts and then flies.
What is this world's delight?—
Lightning that mocks the night,
Brief even as bright.

SHELLEY.

THE picture next presented by the point of land that the unfortunate Hurons had selected for their last place of encampment, need scarcely be laid before the eyes of the reader. Happily for the more tender-minded and the more timid, the trunks of the trees, the leaves, and the smoke had concealed much of that which passed, and night shortly after drew its veil over the lake, and the whole of that seemingly interminable wilderness, which may be said to have then stretched, with far and immaterial interruptions, from the banks of the Hudson to the shores of the Pacific Ocean. Our business carries us into the following day, when light returned upon

the earth, as sunny and as smiling, as if nothing extraordinary had occurred.

When the sun rose on the following morning, every sign of hostility and alarm had vanished from the basin of the Glimmerglass. The frightful event of the preceding evening had left no impression on the placid sheet, and the untiring hours pursued their course in the placid order prescribed by the powerful hand that set them in motion. The birds were again skimming the water, or were seen poised on the wing high above the tops of the tallest pines of the mountains, ready to make their swoops, in obedience to the irresistible laws of their nature. In a word, nothing was changed but the air of movement and life that prevailed in and around the castle. Here, indeed, was an alteration that must have struck the least observant eye. A sentinel, who wore the light-infantry uniform of a royal regiment, paced the platform with measured tread, and some twenty men of the same corps lounged about the place, or were seated in the ark. Their arms were stacked under the eye of their comrade on post. Two officers stood examining the shore with the ship's glass so often mentioned. Their looks were directed to that fatal point, were scarlet coats were still to be seen gliding among the trees, and where the magnifying power of the

instrument also showed spades at work, and the sad duty of interment going on. Several of the common men bore proofs on their persons that their enemies had not been overcome entirely without resistance; and the youngest of the two officers on the platform, wore an arm in a sling. His companion, who commanded the party, had been more fortunate. He it was that used the glass, in making the reconnoissances in which the two were engaged.

A sergeant approached to make a report. He addressed the senior of these officers as Captain Warley, while the other was alluded to as Mr. —, which was equivalent to ensign —— Thornton. The former, it will at once be seen, was the officer who had been named with so much feeling in the parting dialogue between Judith and Hurry. He was, in truth, the very individual with whom the scandal of the garrisons had most freely connected the name of this beautiful but indiscreet girl. He was a hard-featured, red-faced man, of about five-and-thirty, but of a military carriage, and with an air of fashion that might easily impose on the imagination of one as ignorant of the world as Judith.

"Craig is covering us with benedictions," observed this person to his young ensign, with an air of indifference, as he shut the glass, and

handed it to his servant; "to say the truth, not without reason; it is certainly more agreeable to be here in attendance on Miss Judith Hutter, than to be burying Indians on a point of the lake, however romantic the position, or brilliant the victory. By the way, Wright, is Davis still living?"

"He died about ten minutes since, your honour," returned the sergeant to whom this question was addressed. "I knew how it would be, as soon as I found the bullet had touched the stomach. I never knew a man who could hold out long, if he had a hole in his stomach."

"No; it is rather inconvenient for carrying away anything very nourishing," observed Warley, gaping. "This being up two nights *de suite*, Arthur, plays the devil with a man's faculties! I'm as stupid as one of those Dutch parsons on the Mohawk.—I hope your arm is not painful, my dear boy?"

"It draws a few grimaces from me, sir, as I suppose you see," answered the youth, laughing at the very moment his countenance was a little awry with pain. "But it may be borne. I suppose Graham can spare a few minutes, soon, to look at my hurt?"

"She is a lovely creature, this Judith Hutter, after all, Thornton; and it shall not be my fault,

if she is not seen and admired in the parks!' resumed Warley, who thought little of his companion's wound.—"Your arm, eh! Quite true. Go into the ark, sergeant, and tell Dr. Graham I desire he would look at Mr. Thornton's injury, as soon as he has done with the poor fellow with the broken leg. A lovely creature! and she looked like a queen in that brocade dress in which we met her. I find all changed here; father and mother both gone, the sister dying, if not dead, and none of the family left but the beauty! This has been a lucky expedition all round, and promises to terminate better than Indian skirmishes in general."

"Am I to suppose, sir, that you are about to desert your colours, in the great corps of bachelors, and close the campaign with matrimony?"

"I, Tom Warley, turn Benedict! Faith, my dear boy, you little know the corps you speak of, if you fancy any such thing. I do suppose there *are* women in the colonies, that a captain of light-infantry need not disdain; but they are not to be found up here, on a mountain lake; or even down on the Dutch river where we are posted. It is true my uncle, the general, once did me the favour to choose a wife for me, in Yorkshire; but she had no beauty—and I would not marry a princess, unless she were handsome."

"If handsome, you would marry a beggar?"

"Ay, these are the notions of an ensign! Love in a cottage—doors—and windows—the old story, for the hundredth time. The twenty—th don't *marry*. We are not a marrying corps, my dear boy. There's the colonel, old Sir Edwin ——, now; though a full general, he has never thought of a wife; and when a man gets as high as a lieutenant-general, without matrimony, he is pretty safe. Then the lieutenant-colonel is *confirmed*, as I tell my cousin, the bishop. The major is a widower, having tried matrimony, for twelve months in his youth; and we look upon him now as one of our most certain men. Out of ten captains, but one is in the dilemma; and he, poor devil, is always kept at regimental head-quarters, as a sort of *memento mori* to the young men as they join. As for the subalterns, not one has ever yet had the audacity to speak of introducing a wife into the regiment. But your arm is troublesome, and we'll go ourselves, and see what has become of Graham."

The surgeon who had accompanied the party was employed very differently from what the captain supposed. When the assault was over, and the dead and wounded were collected, poor Hetty had been found among the latter. A rifle-bullet had passed through her body, inflicting an

injury that was known at a glance to be mortal. How this wound was received, no one knew; it was, probably, one of those casualties that ever accompany scenes like that related in the previous chapter. The Sumach, all the elderly women, and several of the Huron girls, had fallen by the bayonet; either in the confusion of the *mêlée*, or from the difficulty of distinguishing the sexes, where the dress was so simple. Much the greater portion of the warriors suffered on the spot. A few had escaped, however, and two or three had been taken unharmed. As for the wounded, the bayonet saved the surgeon much trouble. Rivenoak had escaped with life and limb; but was injured, and a prisoner. As Captain Warley and his ensign went into the ark, they passed him, seated in dignified silence, in one end of the scow, his head and leg bound, but betraying no visible signs of despondency or despair. That he mourned the loss of his tribe is certain; still, he did it in the manner that best became a warrior and a chief.

The two soldiers found their surgeon in the principal room of the ark. He was just quitting the pallet of Hetty, with an expression of sorrowful regret on his hard, pock-marked, Scottish features, that it was not usual to see there. All his assiduity had been useless, and he

was compelled, reluctantly, to abandon the expectation of seeing the girl survive many hours. Dr. Graham was accustomed to death-bed scenes, and ordinarily they produced but little impression on him. In all that relates to religion, his was one of those minds which, in consequence of reasoning much on material things, logically and consecutively, and overlooking the total want of premises which such a theory must ever possess, through its want of a primary agent, had become sceptical; leaving a vague opinion, concerning the origin of things, that with high pretensions to philosophy, failed in the first of all philosophical principles, a cause. To him religious dependence appeared a weakness; but when he found one gentle and young like Hetty, with a mind beneath the level of her race, sustained at such a moment by these pious sentiments, and that too, in a way that many a sturdy warrior and reputed hero might have looked upon with envy, he found himself affected by the sight, to a degree that he would have been ashamed to confess. Edinburgh, and Aberdeen, then as now, supplied no small portion of the medical men of the British service; and Dr. Graham, as indeed his name and countenance equally indicated, was, by birth, a North Briton.

"Here is an extraordinary exhibition for a

forest, and one but half-gifted with reason," he observed, with a decided Scotch accent, as Warley and the ensign entered; "I just hope, gentlemen, that when we three shall be called on to quit the twenty—th, we may be found as resigned to go on the half pay of another existence, as this poor demented chiel!"

"Is there no hope that she can survive the hurt?" demanded Warley, turning his eyes towards the pallid Judith, on whose cheeks, however, two large spots of red had settled, as soon as he came into the cabin.

"No more than there is for Charlie Stuart! Approach, and judge for yourselves, gentlemen; ye'll see faith exemplified in an exceeding and wonderful manner. There is a sort of *arbitrium* between life and death, in actual conflict in the poor girl's mind, that renders her an interesting study to a philosopher. Mr. Thornton, I'm at your service, now; we can just look at the arm in the next room, while we speculate as much as we please on the operations and sinuosities of the human mind."

The surgeon and ensign retired, and Warley had an opportunity of looking about him, more at leisure, and with a better understanding of the nature and feelings of the group collected in the cabin. Poor Hetty had been placed on her own simple bed, and was reclining in a half-

seated attitude, with the approaches of death on her countenance, though they were singularly dimmed by the lustre of an expression, in which all the intelligence of her entire being appeared to be concentrated. Judith and Hist were near her; the former seated in deep grief; the latter standing, in readiness to offer any of the gentle attentions of feminine care. Deerslayer stood at the end of the pallet leaning on Killdeer, unharmed in person; all the fine martial ardour that had so lately glowed in his countenance having given place to the usual look of honesty and benevolence; qualities of which the expression was now softened by manly regret and pity. The Serpent was in the back ground of the picture, erect and motionless as a statue; but so observant, that not a look of the eye escaped his own keen glance. Hurry completed the group; being seated on a stool near the door, like one who felt himself out of place in such a scene; but who was ashamed to quit it, unbidden.

"Who is that in scarlet?" asked Hetty, as soon as the captain's uniform caught her eye. "Tell me, Judith, is it the friend of Hurry?"

"'T is the officer who commands the troops, that have rescued us all from the hands of the Hurons," was the low answer of the sister.

"Am I rescued, too?—I thought they said I was shot, and about to die. Mother is dead, and so is father; but you are living, Judith, and so is Hurry. I was afraid Hurry would be killed, when I heard him shouting among the soldiers."

"Never mind—never mind, dear Hetty"—interrupted Judith, sensitively alive to the preservation of her sister's secret, more perhaps at such a moment, than at another. "Hurry is well, and Deerslayer is well, and the Delaware is well, too."

"How came they to shoot a poor girl like me, and let so many men go unharmed? I didn't know that the Hurons were so wicked, Judith!"

"'T was an accident, poor Hetty; a sad accident it has been! No one would willingly have injured *you*."

"I'm glad of that!—I thought it strange; I am feeble-minded, and the red men have never harmed me before. I should be sorry to think that they had changed their minds. I am glad too, Judith, that they havn't hurt Hurry. Deerslayer, I don't think God will suffer any one to harm. It was very fortunate the soldiers came as they did, though, for fire *will* burn!"

"It was indeed fortunate, my sister; God's holy name be for ever blessed for the mercy!"

"I dare say, Judith, you know some of the officers; you used to know so many!"

Judith made no reply; she hid her face in her hands and groaned. Hetty gazed at her in wonder; but naturally supposing her own situation was the cause of this grief, she kindly offered to console her sister.

"Don't mind me, dear Judith," said the affectionate and pure-hearted creature—"I don't suffer, if I do die; why father and mother are both dead, and what happens to *them*, may well happen to *me*. You know I am of less account than any of the family; therefore, few will think of me after I'm in the lake."

"No, no, no—poor, dear, dear Hetty!" exclaimed Judith, in an uncontrollable burst of sorrow—"I, at least, will ever think of you; and gladly, oh! how gladly would I exchange places with you, to be the pure, excellent, sinless creature you are!"

Until now, Captain Warley had stood leaning against the door of the cabin; when this outbreak of feeling, and perchance of penitence, escaped the beautiful girl, he walked slowly and thoughtfully away; even passing the ensign, then suffering under the surgeon's care, without noticing him.

"I have got my Bible here, Judith!" returned

her sister, in a voice of triumph. "It's true, I can't read any longer; there's something the matter with my eyes—*you* look dim and distant —and so does Hurry, now I look at him;— well, I never could have believed that Henry March would have so dull a look! What can be the reason, Judith, that I see so badly to-day? I, whom mother always said had the best eyes of the whole family. Yes, that was it; my mind was feeble—what people call half-witted—but my eyes were *so* good!"

Again Judith groaned; this time no feeling of self, no retrospect of the past, caused the pain. It was the pure, heart-felt sorrow of sisterly love, heightened by a sense of the meek humility and perfect truth of the being before her. At that moment she would gladly have given up her own life to save that of Hetty. As the last, however, was beyond the reach of human power, she felt there was nothing left her but sorrow. At this moment, Warley returned to the cabin, drawn by a secret impulse he could not withstand, though he felt just then as if he would gladly abandon the American continent for ever, were it practicable. Instead of pausing at the door, he now advanced so near the pallet of the sufferer as to come more plainly within her gaze. Hetty could still distinguish

large objects, and her look soon fastened on him.

"Are you the officer that came with Hurry?" she asked. "If you are, we ought all to thank you; for, though I am hurt, the rest have saved their lives. Did Harry March tell you where to find us, and how much need there was for your services?"

"The news of the party reached us by means of a friendly runner," returned the captain, glad to relieve his feelings by this appearance of a friendly communication; "and I was immediately sent out to cut it off. It was fortunate, certainly, that we met Hurry Harry, as you call him, for he acted as a guide; and it was not less fortunate that we heard a firing, which I now understand was merely a shooting at the mark, for it not only quickened our march, but called us to the right side of the lake. The Delaware saw us on the shore, with the glass it would seem; and he and Hist, as I find his squaw is named, did us excellent service. It was, really, altogether a fortunate concurrence of circumstances, Judith."

"Talk not to me of any thing fortunate, sir," returned the girl huskily, again concealing her face. "To me, the world is full of misery. I wish never to hear of marks, or rifles, or soldiers, or *men*, again!"

"Do you know my sister?" asked Hetty, ere the rebuked soldier had time to rally for an answer. "How came you to know that her name is Judith? You are right, for that *is* her name; and I am Hetty, Thomas Hutter's daughters."

"For heaven's sake, dearest sister; for *my* sake, beloved Hetty," interposed Judith, imploringly, "say no more of this."

Hetty looked surprised; but, accustomed to comply, she ceased her awkward and painful interrogatories of Warley, bending her eyes towards the Bible, which she still held between her hands, as one would cling to a casket of precious stones, in a shipwreck, or a conflagration. Her mind now reverted to the future, losing sight, in a great measure, of the scenes of the past.

"We shall not long be parted, Judith," she said; "when *you* die, you must be brought and buried in the lake by the side of mother, too."

"Would to God, Hetty, that I lay there at this moment!"

"No, that cannot be, Judith; people must die before they have any right to be buried. 'Twould be wicked to bury you, or for you to bury yourself, while living. Once I thought

of burying myself;—God kept me from that sin."

"You!—you, Hetty Hutter, think of such an act!" exclaimed Judith, looking up in uncontrollable surprise, for she well knew nothing passed the lips of her conscientious sister, that was not religiously true.

"Yes, I did, Judith; but God has forgotten—no, he *forgets* nothing—but he has *forgiven* it," returned the dying girl, with the subdued manner of a repentant child. "'Twas after mother's death; I felt I had lost the best friend I had on earth, if not the *only* friend. 'Tis true, you and father were kind to me, Judith, but I was so feeble-minded, I knew I should only give you trouble; and then you were so often ashamed of such a sister and daughter; and 'tis hard to live in a world where all look upon you as below them. I thought then, if I could bury myself by the side of mother, I should be happier in the lake, than in the hut."

"Forgive me—pardon me, dearest Hetty; on my bended knees, I beg you to pardon me, sweet sister, if any word or act of mine drove you to so maddening and cruel a thought!"

"Get up, Judith; kneel to God—don't kneel to me. Just so I felt when mother was dying. I remembered every thing I had said and done to

vex her, and could have kissed her feet for forgiveness. I think it must be so with all dying people; though, now I think of it, I don't remember to have had such feelings on account of father."

Judith arose, hid her face in her apron, and wept. A long pause—one of more than two hours—succeeded, during which Warley entered and left the cabin several times; apparently uneasy when absent, and yet unable to remain. He issued various orders which his men proceeded to execute; and there was an air of movement in the party, more especially as Mr. Craig, the lieutenant, had got through with the unpleasant duty of burying the dead, and had sent for instructions from the shore, desiring to know what he was to do with his detachment. During this interval, Hetty slept a little, and Deerslayer and Chingachgook left the ark to confer together. But, at the end of the time mentioned, the surgeon passed upon the platform; and with a degree of feeling his comrades had never before observed in one of his habits, he announced that the patient was rapidly drawing near her end. On receiving this intelligence, the group collected again; curiosity to witness such a death—or a better feeling—drawing to the spot, men who had so lately been actors in a scene seemingly of so

much greater interest and moment. By this time, Judith had got to be inactive, through grief; and Hist alone was performing the little offices of feminine attention that are so appropriate to the sick bed. Hetty herself had undergone no other apparent change, than the general failing that indicated the near approach of dissolution. All that she possessed of mind was as clear as ever; and, in some respects, her intellect, perhaps, was more than usually active.

"Don't grieve for me so much, Judith," said the gentle sufferer, after a pause in her remarks; "I shall soon see mother: I think I see her *now;* her face is just as sweet and smiling as it used to be! Perhaps when I 'm dead, God will give me all my mind, and I shall become a more fitting companion for mother than I ever was before."

"You will be an angel in heaven, Hetty," sobbed the sister; "no spirit there will be more worthy of its holy residence!"

"I don't understand it quite; still I know it must be all true; I 've read it in the Bible. How dark it 's becoming! Can it be night so soon? I can hardly see you at all; where is Hist?"

"I here, poor girl; why you no see me?"

"I do see you; but I couldn't tell whether

't was you or Judith. I believe I sha'n't see you much longer, Hist."

"Sorry for that, poor Hetty. Never mind; pale-face got a heaven for girl, as well as for warrior."

"Where's the Serpent? Let me speak to him—give me his hand—so; I feel it. Delaware, you will love and cherish this young Indian woman; I know how fond she is of *you*; and you must be fond of *her*. Don't treat her as some of your people treat their wives; be a real husband to her. Now, bring Deerslayer near me; give me *his* hand."

This request was complied with, and the hunter stood by the side of the pallet, submitting to the wishes of the girl with the docility of a child.

"I feel, Deerslayer," she resumed, "though I couldn't tell why—but I feel that you and I are not going to part for ever. 'Tis a strange feeling! I never had it before; I wonder what it comes from!"

"'T is God encouraging you in extremity, Hetty; as such it ought to be harboured and respected. Yes, we *shall* meet ag'in, though it may be a long time first, and in a far distant land."

"Do you mean to be buried in the lake, too? If so, that may account for the feeling."

"'T is little likely, gal; 't is little likely: but there 's a region for Christian souls, where there 's no lakes nor woods, they say; though why there should be none of the *last,* is more than I can account for; seeing that pleasantness and peace is the object in view. My grave will be found in the forest, most likely, but I hope my spirit will not be far from your'n."

"So it must be, then. I am too weak-minded to understand these things, but I *feel* that you and I will meet again. Sister, where are you? I can't see, now, any thing but darkness. It must be night, surely!"

"Oh! Hetty, I am here, at your side; these are my arms that are round you," sobbed Judith. "Speak, dearest; is there any thing you wish to say, or have done, in this awful moment?"

By this time Hetty's sight had entirely failed her. Nevertheless, death approached with less than usual of its horrors, as if in tenderness to one of her half-endowed faculties. She was pale as a corpse, but her breathing was easy and unbroken; while her voice, though lowered almost to a whisper, remained clear and distinct. When her sister put this question, however, a blush diffused itself over the features of the dying girl; so faint, however, as to be nearly imperceptible; resembling that hue of the rose

which is thought to portray the tint of modesty, rather than the dye of the flower in its richer bloom. No one but Judith detected this expression of feeling, one of the gentle expressions of womanly sensibility, even in death. On her, however, it was not lost, nor did she conceal from herself the cause.

"Hurry is here, dearest Hetty," whispered the sister, with her face so near the sufferer as to keep the words from other ears. "Shall I tell him to come and receive your good wishes?"

A gentle pressure of the hand answered in the affirmative, and then Hurry was brought to the side of the pallet. It is probable that this handsome but rude woodsman had never before found himself so awkwardly placed, though the inclination which Hetty felt for him (a sort of secret yielding to the instincts of nature, rather than any unbecoming impulse of an ill-regulated imagination) was too pure and unobtrusive to have created the slightest suspicion of the circumstance in his mind. He allowed Judith to put his hard colossal hand between those of Hetty, and stood waiting the result in awkward silence.

"This is Hurry, dearest," whispered Judith, bending over her sister, ashamed to utter the words so as to be audible to herself; "speak to him, and let him go."

"What shall I say, Judith?"

"Nay, whatever your own pure spirit teaches, my love. Trust to that, and you need fear nothing."

"Good bye, Hurry"—murmured the girl, with a gentle pressure of his hand—"I wish you would try and be more like Deerslayer."

These words were uttered with difficulty; a faint flush succeeded them for a single instant, then the hand was relinquished, and Hetty turned her face aside, as if done with the world. The mysterious feeling that had bound her to the young man, a sentiment so gentle as to be almost imperceptible to herself, and which could never have existed at all, had her reason possessed more command over her senses, was for ever lost in thoughts of a more elevated, though scarcely of a purer character.

"Of what are you thinking, my sweet sister?" whispered Judith,—"tell me, that I may aid you at this moment."

"Mother—I see mother, now, and bright beings around her in the lake. Why isn't father there?—It 's odd, that I can see mother, when I can't see *you!*—Farewell, Judith."

The last words were uttered after a pause, and her sister had hung over her some time, in anxious watchfulness, before she perceived that the gentle spirit had departed. Thus died

Hetty Hutter, one of those mysterious links between the material and immaterial world, which, while they appear to be deprived of so much that is esteemed and necessary for this state of being, draw so near to, and offer so beautiful an illustration of the truth, purity, and simplicity of another.

CHAPTER XII.

"A baron's chylde to be begylde! it were a cursed dede:
To be felawe with an outlawe; Almighty God forbede!
Yea, better were, the poor squyère, alone to forest yede,
Than ye sholde say, another day, that by my cursed dede
Ye were betrayed: wherefore, good mayde, the best rede that I can
Is, that I to the grene wode go, alone, a banyshed man."

NOTBROWNE MAYDE.

THE day that followed proved to be melancholy, though one of much activity. The soldiers, who had so lately been employed in interring their victims, were now called on to bury their own dead. The scene of the morning had left a saddened feeling on all the gentlemen of the party; and the rest felt the influence of a similar sensation in a variety of ways, and from many causes. Hour dragged on after hour, until evening arrived, and then came the last melancholy offices in honour of poor Hetty Hutter. Her body was laid in the lake, by the side of that of the mother she had so loved and reverenced; the surgeon,

though actually an unbeliever, so far complying with the received decencies of life, as to read the funeral service over her grave, as he had previously done over those of the other *Christian* slain. It mattered not;—that all-seeing eye which reads the heart, could not fail to discriminate between the living and the dead; and the gentle soul of the unfortunate girl was already far removed beyond the errors or deceptions of any human ritual. These simple rites, however, were not wholly wanting in suitable accompaniments. The tears of Judith and Hist flowed freely, and Deerslayer gazed upon the limpid water that now flowed over one whose spirit was even purer than its own mountain springs, with glistening eyes. Even the Delaware turned aside to conceal his weakness, while the common men gazed on the ceremony with wondering eyes and chastened feelings.

The business of the day closed with this pious office. By order of the commanding officer, all retired early to rest, for it was intended to begin the march homeward with the return of light. One party, indeed, bearing the wounded, the prisoners, and the trophies, had left the castle in the middle of the day, under the guidance of Hurry, intending to reach the

fort by shorter marches. It had been landed on the point so often mentioned, or that described in our opening pages; and, when the sun set, was already encamped on the brow of the long, broken, and ridgy hills that fell away towards the valley of the Mohawk. The departure of this detachment had greatly simplified the duty of the succeeding day, disencumbering its march of its baggage and wounded, and otherwise leaving him who had issued the order, greater liberty of action.

Judith held no communication with any but Hist, after the death of her sister, until she retired for the night. Her sorrow had been respected, and both the females had been left with the body, unintruded on, to the last moment. The rattling of the drum broke the silence of that tranquil water, and the echoes of the tattoo were heard among the mountains, so soon after the ceremony was over, as to preclude the danger of interruption. That star which had been the guide of Hist, rose on a scene as silent as if the quiet of nature had never yet been disturbed, by the labours or passions of man. One solitary sentinel, with his relief, paced the platform throughout the night; and morning was ushered in, as usual, by the martial beat of the réveillé.

Military precision had now succeeded to the desultory proceedings of border-men, and when a hasty and frugal breakfast was taken, the party began its movement towards the shore, with a regularity and order, that prevented noise or confusion. Of all the officers, Warley alone remained. Craig headed the detachment in advance; Thornton was with the wounded, and Graham had accompanied his patients, as a matter of course. Even the chest of Hutter, with all the more valuable of his effects, had been borne away; leaving nothing behind that was worth the labour of a removal. Judith was not sorry to see that the captain respected her feelings, and that he occupied himself entirely with the duty of his command, leaving her to her own discretion and feelings. It was understood by all that the place was to be totally abandoned; but, beyond this, no explanations were asked or given.

The soldiers embarked in the ark, with the captain at their head. He had inquired of Judith in what way she chose to proceed, and understanding her wish to remain with Hist to the last moment, he neither molested her with requests, nor offended her with advice. There was but one safe and familiar trail to the Mohawk; and on that, at the proper hour,

he doubted not that they should meet in amity, if not in renewed intercourse.

When all were on board, the sweeps were manned, and the ark moved in its sluggish manner, towards the distant point. Deerslayer and Chingachgook now lifted two of the canoes from the water, and placed them in the castle. The windows and door were then barred, and the house was left by means of the trap, in the manner already described. On quitting the palisades, Hist was seen in the remaining canoe, where the Delaware immediately joined her, and paddled away, leaving Judith standing alone on the platform. Owing to this prompt proceeding, Deerslayer found himself alone with the beautiful, and still weeping mourner. Too simple to suspect any thing, the young man swept the light boat round, and received its mistress in it, when he followed the course already taken by his friend.

The direction to the point, led diagonally past, and at no great distance from, the graves of the dead. As the canoe glided by, Judith, for the first time that morning, spoke to her companion. She said but little; merely uttering a simple request to stop, for a minute or two, ere she left the place.

"I may never see this spot again, Deerslayer,"

she said, "and it contains the bodies of my mother and sister! Is it not possible, think you, that the innocence of one of these beings may answer, in the eyes of God, for the salvation of both?"

"I don't understand it so, Judith; though I'm no missionary, and am but poorly taught. Each spirit answers for its own backslidings; though a hearty repentance will satisfy God's laws."

"Then *must* my poor, poor mother, be in heaven!—Bitterly—bitterly—has she repented of her sins; and surely her sufferings in this life, ought to count as something against her sufferings in the next!"

"All this goes beyond me, Judith.—I strive to do right here, as the surest means of keeping all right hereafter. Hetty was oncommon, as all that know'd her must allow; and her soul was as fit to consort with angels, the hour it left its body, as that of any saint in the Bible!"

"I do believe you only do her justice! Alas! —Alas!—that there should be so great differences between those who were nursed at the same breast, slept in the same bed, and dwelt under the same roof! But no matter—move the canoe a little farther east, Deerslayer;—the sun so dazzles my eyes that I

cannot see the graves. This is Hetty's on the right of mother's?"

"Sartain—you ask'd that of us; and all are glad to do as you wish, Judith, when you do that which is right."

The girl gazed at him near a minute, in silent attention, then she turned her eyes backward, at the castle.

"This lake will soon be entirely deserted," she said,—"and this, too, at a moment when it will be a more secure dwelling place than ever. What has so lately happened will prevent the Iroquois from venturing again to visit it, for a long time to come."

"That it will!—yes, that may be set down as settled. I do not mean to pass this-a-way, ag'in, so long as the war lasts; for, to my mind, no Huron moccasin will leave its print on the leaves of this forest, until their traditions have forgotten to tell their young men of their disgrace and rout."

"And do you so delight in violence and bloodshed? I had thought better of *you*, Deerslayer—believed you one, who could find his happiness in a quiet domestic home, with an attached and loving wife, ready to study your wishes, and healthy and dutiful children, anxious to follow in your footsteps, and to become as honest and just as yourself."

"Lord, Judith, what a tongue you're mistress of! Speech and looks go hand in hand, like; and what one can't do, the other is pretty sartain to perform! Such a gal, in a month, might spoil the stoutest warrior in the Colony."

"And am I, then, so mistaken? Do you really love war, Deerslayer, better than the hearth, and the affections?"

"I understand your meaning, gal; yes, I do understand what you mean, I believe, though I don't think you altogether understand *me*. Warrior I may now call myself, I suppose, for I've both fou't and conquered, which is sufficient for the name; neither will I deny that I've feelin's for the callin', which is both manful and honourable, when carried on accordin' to nat'ral gifts; but I've no relish for blood. Youth is youth, howsever, and a Mingo is a Mingo. If the young men of this region stood by, and suffered the vagabonds to overrun the land, why, we might as well all turn Frenchers at once and give up country and kin. I'm no fire-eater, Judith, or one that likes fightin' for fightin's sake; but I can see no great difference atween *givin' up territory afore a war, out of a dread of war, and givin' it up after a war, because we can't help it—onless it be that the last is the most manful and honourable.*"

"No woman would ever wish to see her husband, or brother stand by, and submit to insult and wrong, Deerslayer, however she might mourn the necessity of his running into the dangers of battle. But you've done enough already, in clearing this region of the Hurons; since to you is principally owing the credit of our late victory. Now, listen to me patiently, and answer me with that native honesty, which it is as pleasant to regard in one of your sex, as it is unusual to meet with."

Judith paused; for now that she was on the very point of explaining herself, native modesty asserted its power, notwithstanding the encouragement and confidence she derived from the great simplicity of her companion's character. Her cheeks, which had so lately been pale, flushed, and her eyes lighted with some of their former brilliancy. Feeling gave expression to her countenance and softness to her voice, rendering her who was always beautiful, trebly seductive and winning.

"Deerslayer," she said, after a considerable pause, "this is not a moment for affectation, deception, or a want of frankness of any sort. Here, over my mother's grave, and over the grave of truth-loving, truth-telling Hetty, every thing like unfair dealing seems to be out of

place. I will, therefore, speak to you without any reserve, and without any dread of being misunderstood. You are not an acquaintance of a week, but it appears to me as if I had known you for years. So much, and so much that is important, has taken place within that short time, that the sorrows and dangers, and escapes of a whole life have been crowded into a few days; and they who have suffered and acted together in such scenes, ought not to feel like strangers. I know that what I am about to say might be misunderstood by most men, but I hope for a generous construction of my course from you. We are not here, dwelling among the arts and deceptions of the settlements, but young people who have no occasion to deceive each other in any manner or form. I hope I make myself understood?"

"Sartain, Judith; few convarse better than yourself, and none more agreeable, like. Your words are as pleasant as your looks."

"It is the manner in which you have so often praised those looks, that gives me courage to proceed. Still, Deerslayer, it is not easy for one of my sex and years, to forget all her lessons of infancy, all her habits, and her natural diffidence, and say openly what her heart feels!"

"Why not, Judith? Why shouldn't women

as well as men deal fairly and honestly by their fellow creatur's? I see no reason why you should not speak as plainly as myself, when there is any thing ra'ally important to be said."

This indomitable diffidence, which still prevented the young man from suspecting the truth, would have completely discouraged the girl, had not her own soul, as well as her whole heart, been set upon making a desperate effort to rescue herself from a future that she dreaded with a horror as vivid, as the distinctness with which she fancied she foresaw it. This motive, however, raised her above all common considerations, and she persevered even to her own surprise, if not to her great confusion.

"I will—I *must* deal as plainly with you, as I would with poor, dear Hetty, were that sweet child living!" she continued, turning pale, instead of blushing, the high resolution by which she was prompted reserving the effect that such a procedure would ordinarily produce on one of her sex; "yes, I will smother all other feelings, in the one that is now uppermost! You love the woods and the life that we pass, here, in the wilderness, away from the dwellings and towns of the whites."

"As I loved my parents, Judith, when they was living! This very spot would be all crea-

tion to me, could this war be fairly over, once; and the settlers kept at a distance."

"Why quit it, then? It has no owner—at least none who can claim a better right than mine, and *that* I freely give to you. Were it a kingdom, Deerslayer, I think I should delight to say the same. Let us then return to it, after we have seen the priest at the fort, and never quit it again, until God calls us away to that world where we shall find the spirits of my poor mother and sister."

A long, thoughtful pause succeeded; Judith having covered her face with both her hands, after forcing herself to utter so plain a proposal, and Deerslayer musing equally in sorrow and surprise, on the meaning of the language he had just heard. At length the hunter broke the silence, speaking in a tone that was softened to gentleness by his desire not to offend.

"You haven't thought well of this, Judith," he said—"no, your feelin's are awakened by all that has lately happened, and believin' yourself to be without kindred in the world, you are in too great haste to find some to fill the places of them that's lost."

"Were I living in a crowd of friends, Deerslayer, I should still think as I think,—say as I now say," returned Judith, speaking with her hands still shading her lovely face.

"Thank you, gal—thank you, from the bottom of my heart. Howsever, I am not one to take advantage of a weak moment, when you're forgetful of your own great advantages, and fancy 'arth and all it holds, is in this little canoe. No—no—Judith, 't would be onginerous in me; what you've offered can never come to pass!"

"It all may be, and that without leaving cause of repentance to any," answered Judith, with an impetuosity of feeling and manner, that at once unveiled her eyes. "We can cause the soldiers to leave our goods on the road, till we return, when they can easily be brought back to the house; the lake will be no more visited by the enemy, this war at least; all your skins may be readily sold at the garrison. There *you* can buy the few necessaries we shall want, for I wish never to see the spot, again; and Deerslayer," added the girl, smiling with a sweetness and nature that the young man found it hard to resist; "as a proof how wholly I am and wish to be yours—how completely I desire to be nothing but your wife, the very first fire that we kindle, after our return, shall be lighted with the brocade dress, and fed by every article I have that you may think unfit for the woman you wish to live with!"

"Ah's! me—you're a winning and a lovely creatur', Judith; yes, you *are* all that; and no one

can deny it, and speak truth. These pictur's are pleasant to the thoughts, but they mightn't prove so happy as you now think 'em. Forget it all, therefore, and let us paddle after the Sarpent and Hist, as if nothing had been said on the subject."

Judith was deeply mortified; and, what is more, she was profoundly grieved. Still there was a steadiness and quiet in the manner of Deerslayer, that completely smothered her hopes; and told her that for once, her exceeding beauty had failed to excite the admiration and homage it was wont to receive. Women are said seldom to forgive those who slight their advances; but this high-spirited and impetuous girl entertained no shadow of resentment, then or ever, against the fair-dealing and ingenuous hunter. At the moment, the prevailing feeling was the wish to be certain that there was no misunderstanding. After another painful pause, therefore, she brought the matter to an issue, by a question too direct to admit of equivocation.

"God forbid that we lay up regrets, in after life, through any want of sincerity now;" she said. "I hope we understand each other, at least. You will not accept me for a wife, Deerslayer?"

"'Tis better for both that I shouldn't take advantage of your own forgetfulness, Judith. We can never marry."

"You do not love me,—cannot find it in your heart, perhaps, to esteem me, Deerslayer!"

"Every thing in the way of fri'ndship, Judith —every thing, even to sarvices and life itself. Yes, I'd risk as much for you, at this moment, as I would risk in behalf of Hist; and that is sayin' as much as I can say in favour of any darter of woman. I do not think I feel towards either—mind, I say *either*, Judith—as if I wished to quit father and mother—if father and mother was livin'; which, however, neither is—but if both was living, I do not feel towards any woman as if I wished to quit 'em in order to cleave unto *her*."

"This is enough!" answered Judith, in a rebuked and smothered voice; "I understand all that you mean. Marry you cannot, without loving; and that love you do not feel for me. Make no answer, if am right; for I shall understand your silence. *That* will be painful enough of itself."

Deerslayer obeyed her, and he made no reply. For more than a minute, the girl riveted her bright eyes on him, as if to read his soul; while he sat playing with the water, like a corrected school-boy. Then Judith herself, dropped the end of her paddle, and urged the canoe away from the spot, with a movement as reluctant as the feelings which controlled it. Deerslayer quietly

aided the effort, however, and they were soon on the trackless line taken by the Delaware.

In their way to the point, not another syllable was exchanged between Deerslayer and his fair companion. As Judith sat in the bow of the canoe, her back was turned towards him, else it is probable its expression might have induced him to venture some soothing terms of friendship and regard. Contrary to what would have been expected, resentment was still absent, though the colour frequently changed from the deep flush of mortification to the paleness of disappointment. Sorrow, deep, heart-felt sorrow, however, was the predominant emotion, and this was betrayed in a manner not to be mistaken.

As neither laboured hard at the paddle, the ark had already arrived, and the soldiers had disembarked, before the canoe of the two loiterers reached the point. Chingachgook had preceded it, and was already some distance in the wood, at a spot where the two trails, that to the garrison, and that to the villages of the Delawares, separated. The soldiers, too, had taken up their line of march; first setting the ark adrift again, with a reckless disregard of its fate. All this Judith saw; but she heeded it not. The Glimmerglass had no longer any charms for her; and when

she put her foot on the strand, she immediately proceeded on the trail of the soldiers, without casting a single glance behind her. Even Hist was passed unnoticed; that modest young creature shrinking from the averted face of Judith, as if guilty herself of some wrong doing.

"Wait you here, Sarpent," said Deerslayer, as he followed in the footsteps of the dejected beauty, while passing his friend. "I will just see Judith among her party, and come and j'ine you."

A hundred yards had hid the couple from those in front, as well as those in their rear, when Judith turned and spoke.

"This will do, Deerslayer," she said, sadly. "I understand your kindness, but shall not need it. In a few minutes, I shall reach the soldiers. As you cannot go with me on the journey of life, I do not wish you to go further on this. But, stop; before we part, I would ask you a single question. And I require of you, as you fear God, and reverence the truth, not to deceive me in your answer. I know you do not love another; and I can see but one reason, why you cannot, *will* not love me. Tell me, then, Deerslayer,—" The girl paused, the words she was about to utter, seeming to choke her. Then, rallying all her resolution, with a

face that flushed and paled at every breath she drew, she continued; "Tell me, then, Deerslayer, if any thing light of me, that Henry March has said, may not have influenced your feelings?"

Truth was the Deerslayer's polar-star. He ever kept it in view; and it was nearly impossible for him to avoid uttering it, even when prudence demanded silence. Judith read his answer in his countenance; and with a heart nearly broken by the consciousness of undeserving, she signed to him an adieu, and buried herself in the woods. For some time Deerslayer was irresolute as to his course; but, in the end, he retraced his steps and joined the Delaware. That night, the three "camped" on the head waters of their own river, and the succeeding evening they entered the village of the tribe; Chingachgook and his betrothed in triumph; their companion honoured and admired, but in a sorrow that it required months of activity to remove.

The war that then had its rise was stirring and bloody. The Delaware chief rose among his people, until his name was never mentioned without eulogiums; while another Uncas, the last of his race, was added to the long line of warriors who bore that distinguished appellation. As for the Deerslayer, under the *sobriquet* of Hawkeye, he made his fame spread far and near,

until the crack of his rifle became as terrible to the ears of the Mingos, as the thunders of the Manitou. His services were soon required by the officers of the crown, and he especially attached himself, in the field, to one in particular, with whose after-life he had a close and important connection.

Fifteen years had passed away, ere it was in the power of the Deerslayer to revisit the Glimmerglass. A peace had intervened, and it was on the eve of another and a still more important war, when he and his constant friend Chingachgook, were hastening to the forts to join their allies. A stripling accompanied them, for Hist already slumbered beneath the pines of the Delawares, and the three survivors had now become inseparable. They reached the lake just as the sun was setting. Here all was unchanged; the river still rushed through its bower of trees; the little rock was wasting away by the slow action of the waves in the course of centuries; the mountains stood in their native dress, dark, rich and mysterious; while the sheet glistened in its solitude, a beautiful gem of the forest.

The following morning, the youth discovered one of the canoes drifted on the shore in a state of decay. A little labour put it in a state for service, and they all embarked with a desire to examine the place. All the points were passed,

and Chingachgook pointed out to his son, the spot where the Hurons had first encamped, and the point whence he had succeeded in stealing his bride. Here they even landed; but all traces of the former visit had disappeared. Next they proceeded to the scene of the battle, and there they found a few of the signs that linger around such localities. Wild beasts had disinterred many of the bodies, and human bones were bleaching in the rains of summer. Uncas regarded all with reverence and pity, though traditions were already rousing his young mind to the ambition and sternness of a warrior.

From the point, the canoe took its way toward the shoal, where the remains of the castle were still visible, a picturesque ruin. The storms of winter had long since unroofed the house, and decay had eaten into the logs. All the fastenings were untouched, but the seasons rioted in the place, as if in mockery at the attempt to exclude them. The palisades were rotting, as were the piles; and it was evident that a few more recurrences of winter, a few more gales and tempests, would sweep all into the lake, and blot the building from the face of that magnificent solitude. The graves could not be found. Either the elements had obliterated their traces, or time had caused those who looked for them to forget their position.

The ark was discovered, stranded on the eastern shore, where it had long before been driven, with the prevalent northwest winds. It lay on the sandy extremity of a long low point, that is situated about two miles from the outlet, and which is itself fast disappearing before the action of the elements. The scow was filled with water, the cabin unroofed, and the logs were decaying. Some of its coarser furniture still remained, and the heart of Deerslayer beat quick, as he found a ribbon of Judith's fluttering from a log. It recalled all her beauty, and, we may add, all her failings. Although the girl had never touched his heart, the Hawkeye, for so we ought now to call him, still retained a kind and sincere interest in her welfare. He tore away the ribbon, and knotted it to the stock of Killdeer, which had been the gift of the girl herself.

A few miles farther up the lake another of the canoes was discovered; and, on the point where the party finally landed, were found those which had been left there upon the shore. That in which the present navigation was made, and the one discovered on the eastern shore, had dropped through the decayed floor of the castle, drifted past the falling palisades, and had been thrown as waifs upon the beach.

From all these signs, it was probable the lake had not been visited since the occurrence

of the final scene of our tale. Accident, or tradition, had rendered it again a spot sacred to nature; the frequent wars, and the feeble population of the colonies, still confining the settlements within narrow boundaries. Chingachgook and his friend left the spot with melancholy feelings. It had been the region of their First War-Path, and it carried back the minds of both to scenes of tenderness, as well as to hours of triumph. They held their way towards the Mohawk in silence, however, to rush into new adventures, as stirring and as remarkable as those which had attended their opening career on this lovely lake. At a later day, they returned to the place, where the Indian found a grave.

Time and circumstances have drawn an impenetrable mystery around all else connected with the Hutters. They lived, erred, died, and are forgotten. None connected have felt sufficient interest in the disgraced and disgracing, to withdraw the veil; and a century is about to erase even the recollection of their names. The history of crime is ever revolting, and it is fortunate that few love to dwell on its incidents. The sins of the family have long since been arraigned at the judgment-seat of God, or are registered for the terrible settlement of the last great day.

The same fate attended Judith. When Hawkeye reached the garrison on the Mohawk, he inquired anxiously after that lovely but misguided creature. None knew her—even her person was no longer remembered. Other officers had, again and again, succeeded the Warleys, and Craigs, and Grahams; though an old sergeant of the garrison, who had lately come from England, was enabled to tell our hero, that Sir Robert Warley lived on his paternal estates, and that there was a lady of rare beauty in the lodge who had great influence over him, though she did not bear his name. Whether this was Judith, relapsed into her early failing, or some other victim of the soldier's, Hawkeye never knew, nor would it be pleasant or profitable to inquire. We live in a world of transgressions and selfishness, and no pictures that represent us otherwise can be true; though, happily for human nature, gleamings of that pure Spirit in whose likeness man has been fashioned, are to be seen relieving its deformities, and mitigating, if not excusing, its crimes.

THE END.

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